

Road safety is important to trucking association

On June 18, the Caledon Citizen published, nearly verbatim, an OPP release entitled "Why commercial truck drivers need to be among the safest." The article highlighted statistics that showed the number of collisions involving commercial trucks in Ontario. Unfortunately, however, the numbers cited by OPP were devoid of context, especially in relation to truck involvement in fatal crashes and the correlation with vehicle defects.

Although the article painted an overall negative picture of truck safety, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation's latest Ontario Road Safety Annual Report (ORSAR) confirmed once again that trucks are the safest vehicles and truck drivers are the safest drivers on the road. The report showed that trucks represented just 4.5 per cent of the total number of vehicles involved in all collisions in Ontario, with tractor-trailers representing only 2.4 per cent. Furthermore, of the nearly 274,000 large trucks registered in 2012, only .02 per cent were involved in fatal collisions. The report also confirms what has been the case for years - that trucks and truck drivers are not usually the cause of the fatal collisions they are involved in. What causes accidents is driver behaviour and according to the numbers, large truck drivers involved in fatal collisions are deemed to be "driving properly" 68 per cent of the time compared to 39 per cent for the other drivers in the same collisions. As well, of the 98 large trucks involved in fatal crashes, not one had an apparent defect that may have contributed to the crash.

While the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) generally supports the type of enforcement activity such as OPP's Operation Corridor safety blitz earlier this month, I would like to point out that in many cases these isolated campaigns inspect an array of "trucks" - most of which are not operated by trucking companies whose primary function is pick-up and delivery service. OTA considers road safety to be a 24/7 endeavor. It's important that your readers see just how serious the trucking industry is about road safety. I think the record clearly shows that is in fact the case.

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