



HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVERS

Heavy vehicles have different safety requirements to other vehicles. There are specific road rules and added responsibilities that apply to both the drivers of heavy vehicles and to those who share the road with them. Heavy vehicles travel more than 1.3 billion kilometres each year in South Australia and are an important component of the transport system; therefore a whole of community response is needed to improve heavy vehicle driver safety.

Because of the mass and rigidity of a heavy vehicle, the consequences can be significant if another vehicle collides with them. Heavy vehicles represent on average (2008-2012) 16% of fatal crashes and 7% of serious injury crashes on South Australian roads.

One contributor to truck occupant deaths is the low use of seatbelts by truck drivers. For the 5 year period 2008 – 2012, 30% of heavy vehicle drivers killed or seriously injured were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. Speed and fatigue have also been identified as key contributors to heavy vehicle crashes.

For the five years from 2008 to 2012 there were 77 fatal crashes involving heavy vehicles. The heavy vehicle driver was deemed responsible in just 26% of these crashes. Heavy vehicles have limitations when it comes to accelerating and stopping. They also need more room to turn and their blind spots are different to passenger vehicles. By identifying driving behaviours that lead to crashes between passenger vehicles and heavy vehicles, countermeasures including 'share the road' public education awareness campaigns can help further reduce the incidence and severity of crashes.

Vehicle technology also has the potential to significantly improve heavy vehicle safety. Technologies such as intelligent speed adaptation, seatbelt monitoring and advanced emergency braking systems would all be expected to reduce heavy vehicle crashes.

The South Australian Road Safety Action Plan 2013-2016, developed in consultation with the Road Safety Stakeholder Reference Group, has identified the following priority actions to improving heavy vehicle driver safety on our roads.

Key actions:

Investing in safer roads

- > Address fatigue by continuing to upgrade rest areas on interstate freight routes and increase the installation of audio tactile markers where appropriate. (DPTI)
- > Continue to seek opportunities to increase investment in road maintenance. (DPTI)

Better informed communities

- > Promote the 'sharing the road with heavy vehicles' educational campaign. (DPTI, SARTA)