

January 28, 2022

Kaye Krishna
Deputy Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Via email [REDACTED]

Re.: BCTA Key Safety Initiatives on 2018 Auditor General Report on Commercial Vehicle Safety

I am writing to reiterate key safety initiatives that we have previously raised with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) on October 3, 2019 and December 5, 2019 in response to the concerns raised by the Auditor General (AG) in the December 2018 Commercial Vehicle Safety Report (Report) and to again stress the importance of working together to improve commercial vehicle safety in BC.

While we are very much appreciative of the work by MoTI to engage BCTA in the development and implementation of two of our long standing safety priorities (Class 1 Mandatory Entry Level Training and the province-wide National Safety Code knowledge test), more work is needed to make our roads safer. As you are aware, safety is BCTA's number one priority. In the interest of advancing safety in BC's commercial road transportation industry, we are presenting the following recommendations prepared by BCTA's Safety Committee that highlight our industry's key safety-related priorities:

1. Publicly available Carrier Profiles
2. Increased NSC auditor staffing
3. Increased audits for non-compliance
4. Mandated speed-limiters
5. Improved highway maintenance
6. Increased quality and quantity of commercial vehicle rest stop facilities

1. Make Carrier Profiles publicly accessible online

As noted in the past, providing shippers easy access to Carrier Profiles promotes safety on the roads and across the road transportation industry as it allows customers to incorporate a carrier's safety record into their selection process.

A concerning discovery was made from a BCTA survey conducted in August 2020 that revealed only 34% of the shipping community/transportation customers request a copy of a carrier's detailed Carrier Profile for consideration in their selection process. Alternatively, two-thirds of shippers/customers are not requesting copies of a carrier's profile and therefore are not considering safety as part of their selection process, but rather principally hiring carriers based on rates.

BCTA is actively promoting to the shipping community the need to consider safety and environmental metrics in addition to rate consideration as part of the carrier selection/bidding process. However, it is critical that accessibility and real time access to Carrier Profiles are available to encourage the uptake of the shipping community's consideration of safety-related values in their selection process.

2. Increase National Safety Code (NSC) auditor staffing levels

The AG report found MoTI has not been able to consistently meet its own standards for audits for non-compliant carriers. For example, during the first half of 2016, 46% of inspections triggered by audits (75% in the South Coast region) that were meant to be completed within 3 to 6 months were not started until 12 to 18 months after its initial request date. BCTA warned that this is a public safety matter, as it allows non-compliant carriers to continue operating unsafely for lengthy periods of time, allowing them to commit additional infractions without serious consequences.

We believe that these delays are primarily due to insufficient NSC auditor staffing levels. By comparison, MoTI's Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program has roughly 30 auditors for approximately 2,200 designated inspection facilities. BCTA respectfully requests that MoTI staff the NSC office at sufficient levels to meet its own audit standards and ensure road safety.

3. Increase audits for non-compliant carriers

BCTA recommends particular focus on audits for non-compliant carriers (which CVSE aims to complete within 3-6 months of being triggered) and audits for new carriers (which CVSE aims to complete within 12-18 months of issuing an NSC certificate). The delay in audits for non-compliance is especially concerning as it allows the opportunity for more non-compliant and potentially unsafe behaviour.

4. Mandate speed limiters at 105 km/h in conjunction with the implementation of provincial electronic logging devices (ELDs)

BCTA recommends mandating the use of speed limiters on all heavy commercial vehicles, with the maximum speed set to 105 km/h. In Canada, the provinces of Ontario and Quebec have both mandated the use of speed limiters. A 2014-2015 Ontario Ministry of Transportation study found that two years after requiring commercial vehicles to set speed limiters at 105 km/h, speed-related at-fault collisions involving large commercial vehicles decreased by 73%.

Studies in the United States have shown an increase in speed-related commercial vehicle accidents following their ELD mandate. Specifically, a study by the University of Arkansas found that for carriers with one truck, unsafe driving violations increased by 26%, and for carriers with two to six trucks, unsafe driving violations increased by 16.7%.¹ Given that drivers have no way to “adjust” their driving time in an electronically compliant framework, the evidence indicates that many have attempted to compensate by speeding, which is why BCTA is strongly recommending that speed limiter legislation be brought in force in harmony with a provincial ELD mandate.

Beyond the safety benefit, speed limiters are also a proven technology for managing fuel consumption. As fuel consumption and commensurate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions climb exponentially with increases in speeds above 105 km/h, the proposed speed limiter mandate will result in a reduction of GHG emissions. The exact magnitude of fuel savings and GHG reductions for BC is unknown due to insufficient speed, volume, and distance-travelled data. However, Ontario’s Ministry of Transportation estimates the “combined effect of transportation initiatives in Ontario, which includes speed limiter regulation, is expected to produce a GHG reduction of 4.6 Mt by 2020.”²

BCTA recommends that in the interest of advancing safety in BC’s commercial road transportation industry, the Province mandates the use of speed limiters on all heavy commercial vehicles with the maximum speed set to 105 km/h.

BCTA recommends the adoption of a provincial ELD standard, consistent with Transport Canada’s federal ELD standard which came into effect June 12, 2021.

5. Increase Highway Maintenance

While we recognize that this year has been very challenging due to flooding and an unprecedented number of weather events throughout the province, we remain deeply concerned with BC’s highway winter maintenance.

¹ Alex Scott, Andrew Balthrop, Jason W. Miller 2021. Unintended responses to IT-enabled monitoring: The case of the electronic logging device mandate.

² Ontario Ministry of Transportation. 2018. Evaluation of Ontario’s Speed Limiter Program for Large Trucks: A Study of Safety Outcomes and Compliance Post 2009 Legislation. [p. 11.]

BCTA was hopeful that the new highway contracts signed over the last few years, which specified higher standards and a more proactive approach when a severe weather event occurs, would have improved the level of winter maintenance on our roads. However, based on the number of calls and emails from our members citing unsafe driving conditions, coupled with the number of commercial related accidents to date, road maintenance conditions do not appear to have improved.

BCTA recommends that in the interest of road safety, a working group be constructed immediately to thoroughly review the level of road maintenance in the province and help develop recommendations to improve the level and transparency of service standards. In support of collaboration, the working group should include, at a minimum, representatives from MoTI's CVSE and Highway Services Department and representatives from industry, including, but not limited to, BCTA, carriers, and maintenance contractors.

6. Safety Rest Areas

Rest stops are essential to the health and safety of commercial vehicle drivers.

As the province rebuilds the provincial highway network, BCTA recommends that the availability and quality of rest stop facilities on main highway and arterial corridors throughout the province be improved. Rest stops should:

- be provided within 50 km from urban centres and at a maximum of 150 km intervals thereafter. Ideally, the interval would be 80 km, which was determined to be a suitable distance based on US and Australian research;
- be clearly marked with road signs that indicate distance to the rest area, and in the event that it is located off-route, directions to the rest area, as well as the distance to the closest next rest area;
- have sufficient parking to accommodate all commercial vehicles, including over-sized commercial vehicles for short rest-stops and longer over-night stops;
- have truck parking bays that are well separated and clearly marked when combined with general purpose rest areas;
- have truck parking bays that are arranged parallel to each other and at an angle to ease access and to maximize the number of spaces;
- should include basic amenities such as washrooms, food service, tables, internet access, and facilities that provide protection from the elements (shade, rain cover, etc.); and
- should be built in a manner that supports the fight against climate change, by including commercial charging and refueling stations, and the ability for power off-takes.

We look forward to continuing to work together to improve commercial vehicle safety throughout BC. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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