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THE CHALLENGE

Why are there so many crashes involving Semi Tractor Trailers and what laws are there to protect me?

THE SOLUTION

The most common cause of these crashes is poor training, drivers falling asleep at the wheel, improper maintenance, improper loading or aggressive driving. There are Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations designed to reduce the number of people injured or killed by these big trucks, yet, every year there are more truck drivers on the road, more accidents, more fatalities and more violations of the trucking regulations designed to keep us safe.

Every 16 minutes a person is killed or sustains severe injuries in collisions involving tractor-trailers. When you are hit by a truck weighing more than 10,000 pounds, the injuries sustained are severe. Although they are only 3% of all the vehicles registered, they account for 12% of all of the vehicles involved in fatal crashes. In St. Louis, because 3 major highways intersect, providing trucking companies the ability to move goods from east to west, north to south, there are many more commercial trucks driving across our roads. And with our economy, more unqualified or new drivers are taking to the road and being hired by the trucking companies to carry their loads.

The drivers for these trucking companies are under considerable



pressure to move the cargo as quickly as possible, making 16 hour days not uncommon. Studies revealed that 20% of these truck drivers reported that they had fallen asleep while driving within the last 30 days. Federal regulations address the hours that drivers are allowed to log. Unfortunately, some trucking companies, certainly not all, find ways around or ignore these restrictions, putting us all in danger. In order to keep their jobs, truckers have no choice but to keep the wheels moving.

Sometimes companies hire incompetent or unskilled drivers and fail to provide appropriate training. According to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis, more than 25% of the truck drivers involved in crashes resulting in fatalities had received at least one prior speeding conviction, 7% had previous license suspensions or revocations and some had prior felony convictions. The only plausible explanation for hiring drivers with such bad driving records is so that the trucking company could move cargo as inexpensively as possible. Last year trucking company revenues totaled \$610 billion dollars and are forecasted to almost double by 2015.

When a person is hurt or their loved one killed, they need to find an attorney experienced and knowledgeable about the trucking industry and the Federal Regulations who will enforce these laws and fight for their rights against this wealthy and powerful industry. Fighting back is one way to help keep it from happening to anyone else. If it costs the industry too much to behave this way, eventually it will stop.