Too Fast for Conditions

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SAFETY IS A CPC FACT

Earlier this month, National Work Zone Awareness Week was held to bring national attention to motorist and worker safety and mobility issues in work zones. You might be interested to know that a CMV driver was traveling at 60 mph in a 45 mph work zone in Illinois. The truck driver rear-ended a 25-passenger bus. The crash caused a five-vehicle pileup, killing 8 women and injuring about a dozen others. As a result of the crash, the truck driver was charged and convicted of reckless homicide and sentenced to four years in prison.

Don't let this happen to you! Driving too fast for conditions is a serious issue and depends upon you to make the call. Only you can determine what the appropriate speed is to ensure your safety and that of the motoring public.

Examples of conditions where drivers may find themselves driving too fast include: wet roadways (rain, snow, or ice), reduced visibility (fog), uneven roads, construction zones, curves, intersections, gravel roads, and heavy traffic. The Large Truck Crash Causation Study (LTCCS) reported that 23% of large-truck crashes occurred when commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers were traveling too fast for conditions.

Below are some tips that will help you maintain a safe speed for various driving conditions.

- Adjust your speed to safely match weather conditions, road conditions, visibility, and traffic. Excessive driving speed is a major cause of fatal crashes, and higher speeds may cause more severe crashes. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) recently reported that 25% of speeding-related large-truck fatalities occurred during adverse weather conditions.
- When it first starts to rain, water mixes with oil on the road making it particularly slippery As a result, you should reduce your speed by 1/3 on wet roads and by 1/2 or more on snow packed roads (i.e., if you would normally be traveling at a speed of 60 mph on dry pavement, then on a wet road you should reduce your speed to 40 mph, and on a snow-packed road you should reduce your speed to 30 mph). When you come upon slick, icy roads you should drive slowly and cautiously and pull off the road if you can no longer safely control the vehicle.
- Enter curves slowly. Some 40% of speeding-related fatalities occur on curves Large trucks should reduce their speed even further. Studies have shown that large trucks entering Speed limits posted on curve warning signs are intended for passenger vehicles, not large trucks. a curve, even at the posted speed limit, have rolled over due to their high center of gravity.
- Approach an exit/entrance ramp at a safe speed. Truck rollovers are more likely to occur on exit/entrance ramps when the driver misjudges the sharpness of the ramp curve and enters the curve at an excessive speed. The posted speed limit on an exit/entrance ramp generally shows the safe speed for a passenger vehicle; the safe speed for a large truck is usually significantly lower than the posted speed.
- Be more cautious with a loaded trailer. Loaded trailers have a higher center of gravity and sudden speed adjustment may cause the load to shift, leading to skidding or a rollover. Large trucks with fully loaded trailers are 10 times more likely to roll over than those with empty trailers.