

Sharing the Road with Commercial Motor Vehicles



Large trucks and buses (known as commercial motor vehicles or CMVs) are disproportionately represented in traffic crashes. CMVs are roughly 5.2% of vehicles on the nation's roadways but are involved in 21.2% of crashes nationwide. (Source: 2022 Pocket Guide to Large Trucks and Buses)

CMV drivers are certainly not faultless in crashes occurring on Missouri roadways, but the data consistently reflects that too many passenger vehicle drivers unnecessarily endanger themselves and those operating around them. Between 2018 – 2022, Missouri recorded 1,929 fatal and serious injury crashes involving at least one CMV and at least one passenger vehicle. Of the passenger vehicle drivers involved in those fatal and serious injury crashes, 52% had the sole contributing factor to the crashes. Of the CMV drivers involved in those fatal and serious injury crashes, 24% had the sole contributing factor to the crashes.

Because they are generally longer, taller, and heavier than a passenger vehicle, there are three key safety challenges that CMVs face while operating on the roadways: 1) huge blind spots (also known as No Zones) in front, behind, and on both sides of the CMV, 2) longer stopping distances, and 3) wider turning radiiuses.

Walmart has been partnering with MoDOT for a number of years to raise awareness of sharing the road with CMVs. Their "Let's Drive Change" wrapped trailer accompanies their professional driver(s) to provide audiences a better appreciation of the mere size of a CMV. They set up cones and/or flags in front of the CMV to demonstrate stopping distances and behind the CMV to demonstrate blind spots and following distances. They also park vehicles on either side of the CMV to further demonstrate blind spots. Audiences are invited to climb into the cab of the CMV and explore these strategically placed objects (and honk the horn if they are so inclined). These demonstrations reinforce classroom presentations regarding the three key safety challenges that CMVs face, as well as tips on how to drive safely around large trucks and buses. Audiences that have participated in these hands-on demonstrations have expressed a better understanding (and appreciation) of sharing the road with CMVs.

Organizations are encouraged to include CMV Awareness information in their efforts where possible and replicate these types of demonstrations with a local motor carrier company. If you provide the space, they will provide real-life experiences and safety tips! Contact Heather Luebbert with the MoDOT Highway Safety and Traffic Division at (573) 751-5419 or heather.luebbert@modot.mo.gov for more information.

