



P.S.I. By The Numbers

MTIS by P.S.I.
is in use on
trailers operated
by 70 %
of the Top 100
for-hire
carriers.

Safety and Trucking

Last month I had the opportunity to attend the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance annual conference and exhibition in Buffalo, NY. CVSA is an alliance of safety inspectors from every state, Canadian province, and Mexico. These law enforcement officials, industry experts and policy administrators gather to review and discuss current and future regulations targeting improvements to commercial vehicle safety. Annually, there are an estimated 4,000+ deaths and nearly 100,000 injuries associated with commercial vehicles.

The three North American government agencies responsible for commercial vehicles presented during the opening session: FMCSA from the USA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration), CCMTA (Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators), and from Mexico the SCT (Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes). They all have the same goal which is to make highways safer.

There are five priorities on which FMCSA is concentrating most of its effort:

- Electronic logging devices
- CSA Program (Compliance, Safety, Accountability)
- Safety Fitness Data (safety ratings based on roadside inspections)
- Unified registration system
- Roadside inspection software improvement program

The Canadian administrators have identified sixteen national safety codes that all provinces must follow. The Mexican officials are working primarily on size and weight rules along with the monitoring of over five million border crossings annually between the USA and Mexico. SCT spoke about the success of NAFTA.

The three organizations each spoke about the issues associated with distracted drivers, including cell phone usage and the wide array of information available to the driver as he or she is operating his/her vehicle. One very interesting piece of data presented showed that drivers delivering the best vehicle fuel economy also had the

lowest accident rate. That's because these drivers pay the most attention to their surroundings on a continuous basis (anticipating slower traffic and traffic lights for instance) leading to improved safety.

Another big issue for the roadside inspectors is aerodynamic tractor-trailers that are built with side skirts, trailer nose cones, and wheel covers. Inspecting vehicles with these devices significantly affects the inspector's ability to access the various components required in the inspection process such as brakes, tires, and wheel ends. When the three government officials were asked if they were taking this issue into account when coming up with new rules and regulations the answer was a disappointing "no----not really".

CVSA has many very active committees including:

- Vehicle committee
- Training
- Information systems
- Passenger carriers (busses)

I had the opportunity to speak to the training committee about inspecting tires and measuring tire pressure with trailers equipped with automatic tire inflation systems. Inspectors are reluctant to actually unscrew an inflation system hose to measure a tire pressure using a gauge. However they will ask the driver to unscrew the hand tight hose if they feel the need to actually measure a tire pressure. In most cases, inspectors still prefer to use the old, not very reliable, tire thumper to determine if a tire is flat or not. Inspectors all agree that if they inspect a trailer with an automatic tire inflation system installed, they understand that the tire pressure should be satisfactory and not underinflated or flat. For fleets, this means there are less potential roadside violations cited with the use of automatic tire inflation systems.

If fleets have recommendations for CVSA they can be contacted through their website at www.cvsa.org

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