

Teen Drivers & Heavy Vehicles: Coexisting Safely

Background

One goal of the National Surface Transportation Safety Center for Excellence (NSTSCE) is to develop a greater understanding of driver decision-making and performance. In response to consistent research literature showing that a larger proportion of light-vehicle drivers are at-fault in incidents involving light-vehicle/heavy-vehicle interactions, NSTSCE researchers conducted the *Survey of Light-Vehicle Driver Education Programs to Determine the Prevalence of Curriculum on Sharing the Road with Heavy Trucks*. Both administrators and teachers in each state in the United States were surveyed to assess the presence of curricula relevant to heavy-vehicle characteristics and procedures for sharing the road. Although preliminary results indicated that a large proportion of light-vehicle driver education programs include a component on how to safely share the road

with heavy vehicles, there may be room for improvement with regard to the content of these programs. It may be beneficial for states that currently do not require their curriculum and/or driver education manual to include a related component to have a supplemental practice document available that details the key safety topics that should be covered when teaching



Determining Who is at Fault

Researchers at VTTI investigated light-vehicle/heavy-vehicle near-crashes and crashes (critical incidents) and found that 78% were initiated by the light-vehicle driver. This larger proportion of light vehicle, at-fault incidents may result from inadequate training in driver education programs about how to safely share the road with heavy vehicles.

students how to share the road with heavy trucks.

Open-ended survey responses from driver education instructors and administrators indicated that students may benefit from supplemental materials such as hands-on experience with a heavy vehicle as part of their driver education coursework. Instructors also need up-to-date materials that they can use while teaching students how to share the road with heavy vehicles.

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NSTSCE Study: Evaluation of Light-Vehicle Driver Education Programs Targeting Sharing the Road with Heavy Vehicles: A Case Study Analysis.

Did You Know?

You can decrease your likelihood of a collision with a heavy vehicle by increasing your following distance to more than four seconds and staying well out of the rear “no zone.”

The purpose of this project was twofold. First, researchers wanted to investigate current light-vehicle driver education programs that contain components on sharing the road with heavy vehicles and develop a supplemental practices document on key sharing-the-road information that teachers could cover with students. A public program (e.g., high school driver education program) and private programs (e.g., Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance [CVSA] Teens & Trucks, Walmart Truck Team, etc.) that teach key sharing-the-road information were identified. These resources were used to develop a supplemental practices document on key sharing-the-road information and how the information may be taught. Second, a case study was performed with a light-vehicle driver education program in a single state that only included a basic textbook-based component on sharing the road with heavy vehicles. Based on the survey results mentioned earlier, two components were introduced into different driver education classrooms and evaluated in comparison with the basic textbook-based component. The first component introduced was updated material (i.e., a DVD developed by the CVSA titled Teens and Trucks). The second component introduced was a hands-on truck experience program developed by NSTSCE researchers based on an investigation of how other organizations conduct hands-on truck demonstrations at high schools.

The results of the study found that, if a truck and driver are available, teachers should try to include a hands-on experience when teaching sharing the road with trucks. Students are likely to find real-world demonstrations helpful and preferable to simply reading about sharing the road in their textbook. Another great resource to assist with teaching how to share the road with heavy vehicle is CMV road sharing website created by NSTSCE researchers:

<http://www.cmvroadsharing.org/>

Final Report: Baker, S., Schaudt, W., Joslin, S., Tidwell, S., & Bowman, D. (2014, October 16). Evaluation of Light-Vehicle Driver Education Programs Targeting Sharing the Road with Heavy Vehicles: A Case Study Analysis. Retrieved from <http://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/51199>



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