



Large Trucks

3,964 people were killed and 95,000 people were injured in crashes involving large trucks in 2013.¹ In the previous 10 years (2004-2013), more than 43,000 people were killed and nearly one million were injured in crashes involving large trucks.² Every year on average, over 4,000 people are killed and nearly 100,000 are injured in large truck crashes.³ Of those killed in 2013, 71 percent were occupants of other vehicles in crashes involving large trucks, 11 percent were non-occupants (pedestrians, pedalcyclists, etc.), and only 17 percent were occupants of large trucks.⁴ ***Large truck crash fatalities increased again from 2012 to 2013.⁵ This follows a 9 percent increase in 2010, a 3 percent increase in 2011 and a 4 percent in 2012, for a combined increase in large truck involved crash fatalities of 17 percent since 2009, while the overall number of traffic fatalities for all motor vehicles declined by 3 percent over that same time.***⁶ Similarly, the number of people injured in large truck involved crashes increased by 28 percent since 2009 while the total number of people injured in all traffic crashes only increased by 4 percent.⁷

LARGE TRUCK SAFETY FACTS

- Annual truck crash fatalities are equivalent to a major airplane crash every other week of the year.
- The annual cost to society from crashes involving commercial motor vehicles is estimated to be over \$99 billion.⁸
- A January 2015 nationwide survey conducted by Harper Polling found that 76 percent of respondents oppose longer and heavier trucks.⁹ Similarly, a May 2013 public opinion poll by Lake Research Partners found that 68 percent of Americans oppose heavier trucks and 88 percent of Americans do not want to pay higher taxes for the damage caused by heavier trucks.¹⁰
- Tractor-trailers moving at 60 mph are required to stop in 310 feet – the length of a football field – once the brakes are applied.¹¹ Actual stopping distances are often much longer due to driver response time before braking and the common problem that truck brakes are often not in top working condition.
 - In 2014, violations related to tires and/or brakes accounted for 5 of the top 10 most common vehicle out-of-service (OOS) violations.¹²
- More than one in every five trucks that is inspected is placed out of service for vehicle deficiencies that prevent it from continuing to operate.¹³
- In fatal two-vehicle crashes between a large truck and a passenger motor vehicle, 96 percent of the fatalities were occupants of the passenger vehicle.¹⁴

- Overweight trucks disproportionately damage our badly deteriorated roads and bridges. An 18,000 pound truck axle does over 3,000 times more damage to pavement than a typical passenger vehicle axle.¹⁵
- Thirty-two percent of America’s major roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 25 percent of our bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.¹⁶ The Federal Highway Administration estimates that \$146 billion in capital investment would be needed on an annual basis over the next 20 years to significantly improve conditions and performance.¹⁷
- Increasing the weight of a heavy truck by only 10 percent increases bridge damage by 33 percent.¹⁸ The FHWA estimated that the investment backlog for bridges, to address all cost-beneficial bridge needs, is \$106.4 billion. The U.S. would need to increase annual funding for bridges by 18 percent over current spending levels to eliminate the bridge backlog by 2030.¹⁹
- The U.S. taxpayer unfairly subsidizes bigger, heavier trucks:
 - According to the FHWA, a truck weighing over 80,000 pounds only pays between 40 and 50 percent of its cost responsibility.²⁰
 - The 2007 Transportation for Tomorrow report, mandated by Congress, confirmed that heavy trucks were underpaying their fair share for highway use, that user fee fairness could be achieved through weight-distance taxes, that heavy trucks should pay an infrastructure damage fee, and that the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax—which only contributes \$1 billion annually to the Highway Trust Fund—had not been changed since the early 1980s.²¹
- The nation’s deteriorating surface transportation infrastructure has severe effects on America’s economy. The American Society of Civil Engineers found the cost to the economy from the state of the surface transportation infrastructure will be approximately 877,000 jobs lost and suppressed GDP growth of \$897 billion by the year 2020. Further, the impact on each American family’s budget would be \$3,100 per year, based on lower earnings and higher spending.²²
- Research and experience show that allowing bigger, heavier trucks will not result in fewer trucks:
 - Since 1982, when Congress last increased the gross vehicle weight limit, truck registrations have increased 91 percent.²³
 - Increases in truck size and weights over more than 35 years have never resulted in fewer heavier trucks on the roads.²⁴
- Heavy trucks account for 17 percent of our nation’s transportation energy use.²⁵
- Trucks with heavier gross weights require larger engines that decrease fuel economy on a miles-per-gallon basis.²⁶

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- ¹ Quick Facts 2013, NHTSA, DOT HS 812 100, Dec. 2014. (Quick Facts 2013)
- ² Traffic Safety Facts 2012: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Crash Data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and the General Estimates System, NHTSA, DOT HS 812,032 (2012 Annual Report); and Quick Facts 2013.
- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ Quick Facts 2013.
- ⁵ *Id.*
- ⁶ 2012 Annual Report and Quick Facts 2013.
- ⁷ *Id.*
- ⁸ 2014 Pocket Guide to large Truck and Bus Statistics: Update October 2014, FMCSA.
- ⁹ Press Release: While Large Trucking Companies Lobby for Bigger Semitrailers, National Troopers Coalition Chair Points to Poll Showing Three of Four Americans Oppose Increases, Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, February 10, 2015.
- ¹⁰ Memo Re: Increasing the legal weight for trucks in the U.S., Lake Research Partners, May 7, 2013, available at <http://trucksafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/sts2013-lr-memo-tsc.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49 Part 571 Section 121: Standard No. 121 Air brake systems (FMVSS 121).
- ¹² Roadside Inspections, Vehicle Violations: All Trucks Roadside Inspections, Vehicle Violations (2014 – Calendar), FMCSA, available at <http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/SafetyProgram/spViolation.aspx?rpt=RDVV>.
- ¹³ Motor Carrier Safety Progress Report (as of 9/30/14), FMCSA.
- ¹⁴ 2012 Annual Report.
- ¹⁵ Equivalent Single Axle Load, Pavement Interactive, Aug. 15, 2007, available at <http://www.pavementinteractive.org/article/equivalent-single-axle-load/>.
- ¹⁶ 2013 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), available at <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>.
- ¹⁷ 2013 Status of the Nation’s Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance, Chapter 8, FHWA 2014, available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/2013cpr/pdfs/cp2013.pdf>.
- ¹⁸ Effect of Truck Weight on Bridge network Costs, NCHRP Report 495, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, 2003, available at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_495.pdf.
- ¹⁹ 2013 Status of the Nation’s Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance, Chapter 7, p. 7-30, FHWA 2014, available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/2013cpr/pdfs/cp2013.pdf>.
- ²⁰ 2000 Federal Highway User Fee Equity Ratios, Addendum to the 1997 Federal Highway Cost Allocation Study Final Report, FHWA, May 2000, available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/hcas/addendum.htm>.
- ²¹ Report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, Transportation for Tomorrow, Dec. 2007, available at http://transportationfortomorrow.com/final_report/pdf/final_report.pdf.
- ²² American Society of Civil Engineers, “Failure to Act: The Economic Impact of Current Investment Trends in Surface Transportation Infrastructure,” January 2013, available at http://www.asce.org/uploadedFiles/Infrastructure/Failure_to_Act/Failure_to_Act_Report.pdf
- ²³ 2012 Annual Report.
- ²⁴ Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, analysis of for-hire truck registrations in the Truck Inventory and Use Survey / Vehicle Inventory and Use Survey, FHWA data, and Maine-Vermont Pilot Program data.
- ²⁵ Transportation Energy Data Book: Edition 33, U.S. Department of Energy, Jul. 2014, available at http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tedb33/Edition33_Full_Doc.pdf.
- ²⁶ Western Uniformity Scenario Analysis: A Regional Truck Size and Weight Scenario Requested by the Western Governor’s Association, Apr. 2004, available at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/truck/wusr/wusr.pdf>.