



## Volume 1, Chapter 3.04—Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement 2018-19 Value-for-Money Audit

### Why We Did This Audit

- The Ministry of Transportation (Ministry) estimated that Ontario's truck traffic increased 10% from 2009 to 2018.
- In the ten years from 2008 to 2017, commercial vehicles (large trucks and buses) were involved in over 182,000 collisions in Ontario. The collisions resulted in almost 44,000 injuries and 1,180 fatalities.

### Why It Matters

- The rise in commercial vehicle traffic means Ontarians are increasingly sharing the road with large vehicles. Collisions involving commercial vehicles have a higher risk of injury and death due to the size of the vehicles involved.
- The direct social cost of large truck collisions in Ontario from 2011 to 2015 was \$2 billion. This includes costs related to property damage, health care, police, courts, fire and ambulance services, tow trucks, and traffic delays.

### What We Found

- Ontario compares favourably to Canada as a whole and the United States for overall road safety. However, Ontario maintained higher fatality and injury rates in the majority of years between 2008 and 2017 when evaluating only commercial vehicles.
- The number of roadside inspections the Ministry conducted of commercial vehicles decreased from 113,000 in 2014 to fewer than 89,000 in 2018. If the Ministry had continued to conduct as many inspections between 2015 and 2018 as it did in 2014, it could have removed as many as 10,000 additional unsafe commercial vehicles or drivers from Ontario's roads.
- The Ministry had not inspected any of the commercial vehicles of 56% of Ontario's 60,000 carriers (operators of commercial vehicles) in the last two years. Nearly 20% of the 870 carriers with the highest collision violation rates had not had any of their vehicles inspected in the last two years.
- Most roadside inspections are performed on provincial highways, allowing "local haulers" to avoid inspection. Over 90% of inspections are conducted by Ministry enforcement officers, usually at truck inspection stations on provincial highways. This indicates that drivers could purposely avoid roadside inspection by driving on municipal roads.
- All drivers must complete Mandatory Entry-Level Training before they can apply for a Class A licence, which is required to drive a tractor-trailer, but the Ministry has not extended this requirement to other licence classes. We found that drivers of large trucks that do not require a Class A licence—for example, a dump truck—were involved in more collisions and injuries per registered truck than drivers of tractor-trailers.
- The Ministry approves organizations, including carriers that operate commercial vehicles, to train and test their own drivers for commercial driver's licences. We found that between 2014/15 and 2018/19 drivers tested by carriers had a pass rate of 95% compared with just 69% at DriveTest centres. However, 25% of the 106 carriers that test their own drivers ranked among the worst 1% of all carriers for at-fault collision performance.
- In Ontario, commercial vehicle drivers are not subject to mandatory drug and alcohol testing either before or during their employment. In addition, Ontario drivers who hold a prescription for medical marijuana may operate a commercial vehicle with marijuana present in their system as long as they are not legally impaired, unlike those who use it recreationally. From 2014 to 2018, 244 collisions involving commercial vehicle carriers listed the driver as under the influence of drugs or alcohol, 21% of which resulted in injury or a fatality.
- The Motor Vehicle Inspection Station (MVIS) inspection certificate ordering system has no automated controls to flag excessive ordering of inspection certificates. Our analysis of orders made by MVIS garages revealed that many seem to be ordering far more than they could be issuing. For instance, 211 garages ordered over 528 certificates per licensed mechanic during 2018, which is 10 times the amount ordered by the average garage.

## **Conclusions**

- The Ministry of Transportation does not have fully effective and efficient processes and systems to consistently carry out safety programs that promote and enforce the operation of commercial vehicles in compliance with legislative and policy requirements that protect the safety of Ontario's road users.
- The Ministry does not have efficient and effective processes to measure and report on the effectiveness of commercial vehicle safety programs.

Read the audit report at [www.auditor.on.ca](http://www.auditor.on.ca)