

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



Crowd Control

The number of people in the world continues to increase and some days it seems that most of them are driving on our roadways, or competing for the same parking spot and table at a truck stop. This congestion adds to stress and increases the risk of accidents. But did you ever consider that even the cab of a truck can get crowded? Forget about team driving – that is authorized and legal. Instead, consider the crowd of passengers that might be riding in the cab of your truck.

This was a painful lesson for Zack and his two kids last spring. He was driving a company truck and pulling an empty van, but he was also using the truck as a taxi. His kids needed to be dropped off at school that morning so he decided that it would be more convenient to take them in his truck while he was under dispatch. Because Zach was not familiar with taking his kids to school along the interstate and because they were somewhat excited to be riding in his truck, the level of distraction in the cab of his truck increased and he nearly missed his exit. However, he made it, but not under control, and his truck overturned. Zack was responsible for a single vehicle, at fault accident.

Zack sustained a minor shoulder injury. Fortunately, both of his children escaped injury other than the psychological trauma of a wreck. Next, everyone got to ride in an ambulance to the local hospital and the kids were late to school. Lastly, Zack lost his job!

REAL LIFE LESSON

There is little we can do about the crowd on the roads and in the truck stops, but there absolutely is something that we can do about the crowd in the cab of a truck. Most companies have written policies regarding the issue and it makes good sense to follow the rules. Typically these rules are based upon two considerations.

Initially, if unauthorized personnel are in the cab of a commercial motor vehicle and that vehicle is involved in an accident, then those personnel increase the legal liability that could result (injuries, death). Commercial vehicles are the property of the company. They are not private vehicles and should not be used as such. The property owner is empowered to define who is allowed to ride in the vehicle.

But even more important, the presence of unauthorized personnel in a commercial vehicle can be a distraction to the driver, and that can result in an accident. Consider Zack's situation. His children were excited about going to school, but even more excited to be riding in a big truck going to school. Their excitement reduced Zack's ability to safely control his vehicle. In this situation crowd control was possible and would have prevented an accident.



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