

OPP dealing with numerous truck collisions

The OPP is concerned about the more than 1,200 commercial motor vehicle (CMV) collisions it has responded to so far this winter and that not all CMV drivers are on board with the OPP's call for motorists to change their driving behaviours and help reduce the number of collisions on Ontario roads.

Between November 1 and December 17, 2014, the OPP responded to 1,295 collisions that involved CMVs, with more than 220 of these incidents having occurred over the past ten days alone. In one recent incident, the driver of a tractor trailer drove into a bridge support, resulting in the jack-knifed truck leaking approximately 15,000 litres of diesel fuel into a creek.

The OPP continues to see large trucks lose control and roll over when the drivers ignore posted ramp speed advisory signs and fail to slow down when traveling on highway on/off ramps. With months of winter driving remaining, this is a particularly important time for drivers of large commercial trucks to drive within the speed limit and to slow right down when weather and road conditions deteriorate.

The OPP acknowledges that many commercial motor vehicle drivers take their driving responsibilities seriously. But it is imperative that every person who drives a large truck recognizes the increased risks and social costs. The risk of death and serious injuries is greater and the property damage and disruption to the movement of traffic are more extensive when these large load-bearing vehicles are involved in collisions, said Chief Superintendent Chuck Cox, Provincial Commander, OPP Highway Safety Division.

Nine of the CMV-related road crashes investigated by the OPP since November 1, 2014 resulted in the loss of life. Since January 1, 2014 the OPP has responded to more than 8,850 collisions that involved a Commercial Motor Vehicle, with 74 resulting in deaths. In November, the OPP warned Ontario drivers that not changing driving behaviours this winter could set the stage for a repeat of last winter's carnage (2013-2014) which ended with more than 33,000 road crashes (in OPP jurisdiction). CMV drivers and other drivers need to share the road and give each other the space they need to travel and stop safely.

The OPP is reminding all drivers to:

? Adjust your speed and slow right down when visibility and road conditions deteriorate and avoid non-essential travel during these periods.

? Activate your full set of headlights every day throughout the winter months. Using the full set of headlights is the only way to completely engage your rear lights and this is critical in helping to reduce the risk of collisions when driving in poor visibility.

? Use MTO's Ontario 511 Traveler Information Services to obtain easy access to up-to-date winter information on road conditions and road closures on provincially maintained roads. Ontario 511 also provides voice-activated, hands-free service. Drivers are expected to observe Ontario cell phone laws when using Ontario 511 while on the road and are encouraged to pull over to a safe location to use it as the safest option. Planning ahead and being prepared will help keep road users safe so help spread the word about Ontario 511!