

Dept. of Transportation: Wisconsin State Patrol's February Law of the Month calls for safe driving around commercial motor vehicles

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As the transportation industry continues to ramp up operations to keep up with the ongoing demands of the coronavirus pandemic, Wisconsin is seeing more commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) on the roads.

With that surge in traffic, states across the country have seen an increase in crashes. Since 2017, Wisconsin has averaged 7,140 crashes involving large trucks every year. Preliminary data shows 89 people died in those incidents in 2021.

The Wisconsin State Patrol's February Law of the Month reminds both CMV operators and other drivers that safety is a shared responsibility on our highways.

"Large trucks like semis need extra room on the roads, especially in the winter when conditions can change quickly," Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent Anthony Burrell said. "All drivers should keep a safe distance from other vehicles, be aware of blind spots, and pass carefully."

State Patrol troopers and inspectors work regularly to enforce traffic laws to reduce crashes involving CMVs, including enforcement details in areas with safety challenges. In 2021, nearly 15,000 CMV operators were stopped for traffic violations and roughly 9,700 other drivers were pulled over for violations impacting safe CMV operation.

Wisconsin has seen a significant increase in the number of new motor carriers in the

past few months. State Patrol staff contact each new carrier operating in interstate commerce to help them develop safety practices. State Patrol also works with technical colleges to offer free training seminars to help CMV operators and carriers recognize their critical role in highway safety.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has invested in technology upgrades at Safety and Weight Enforcement Facilities (SWEFs) across Wisconsin to better monitor CMVs with safety concerns. The SWEF inspections help prevent crashes and damage to the state's roads and bridges. In 2021, the Wisconsin State Patrol weighed 3,087,287 CMVs and completed 30,261 inspections.

Whether you're driving a large vehicle or a small one, the same rules of the road apply:

- Use caution when passing. Don't linger in blind spots. State law ([346.07](#)) prohibits drivers from returning to a traffic lane until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle.
- Don't tailgate. Following too closely decreases a driver's reaction time. State law ([346.14](#)) prohibits drivers from following another vehicle more closely than is reasonable.
- Use and watch for turn signals. CMVs require extra room to turn. Never try to squeeze in between the curb and a turning CMV.

WisDOT [offers resources](#) for CMV drivers on restrictions, rules, and permits. The [511 app](#) has a trucker tab that highlights truck parking options and other things CMV operators need to know when traveling through Wisconsin.