



News Release

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COLLISION RATES INVOLVING COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ON THE RISE: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) Ontario has done a good job of reducing the number of fatalities on its roads, but commercial vehicles continue to be involved in a growing number of collisions in this province, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2008 Annual Report*, released today.

“The most recent figures put the overall fatality rate in Ontario at 0.87 per 10,000 licensed commercial and private drivers, down from a rate of almost 3.0 per 10,000 drivers in the early 1980s, and that’s good news,” McCarter said.

“But the percentage of Ontario collisions involving commercial vehicles has risen in the past decade, from 7.9% in 1995 to 9.2% in 2005, suggesting the province has been relatively more successful in improving passenger-vehicle safety than in improving commercial-vehicle safety.”

The statistics were identified in a value-for-money audit of the \$39-million-a-year Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Program of the Ministry of Transportation. The audit noted that there are about 1.2 million commercial vehicles in the province, including 30,000 buses. Each year, there are about 73 million trips in Ontario by commercial vehicles.

The Report observed that:

- The number of roadside inspections conducted by the Ministry has dropped by 34% since the 2003/04 fiscal year. In 2007, only three of every 1,000 commercial vehicles was subject to a roadside inspection. As well, two-thirds of operator facility audits required by ministry policy for higher-risk operators were cancelled by ministry staff, often without a good reason.
- Although 21% of commercial vehicle trips occur at night, only 8% of inspections are conducted at night.
- Many bus terminal inspections were seriously overdue, with several terminals never having been inspected despite having over 100 buses each.
- In the past decade, ministry data indicated that mechanical defects as a contributing factor in collisions fell by 34%, while driver behaviour as a contributing factor increased by 23%. However, the Ministry devotes few resources to providing operators and drivers with education programs to upgrade their skills.

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