



News Release

For Immediate Release

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More Oversight of Commercial Vehicles Needed to Improve Road Safety in Ontario: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The Ministry of Transport's commercial vehicle safety and enforcement program has missed key opportunities to improve safety on Ontario roads, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2019 Annual Report*, released today.

"Ontario ranks among the safest provinces for overall road safety," Lysyk said after her Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

"However, it has had higher fatality and injury rates for commercial vehicles than Canada as a whole and the United States in most of the years between 2008 and 2017."

The audit found that between 2014 and 2018, the number of Ministry inspections decreased by 22%. The Ministry attributed the decline to its inability to fill enforcement-officer vacancies, and to the fact that a majority of enforcement officers did not meet their individual annual targets for inspections.

As a result, the audit concluded that the Ministry missed the opportunity to remove thousands of unsafe commercial vehicles and drivers from Ontario roads. Injuries and damages from collisions involving big commercial vehicles tend to be more serious because of the size of the vehicles.

According to the Ministry, the direct social cost of large truck collisions in Ontario from 2011 to 2015, the most recent data available, totalled \$2 billion, including property damage, health care, police, courts, and fire and ambulance services.

Specific concerns in the audit included:

- More than half of Ontario's 60,000 carriers have not had any of their commercial vehicles inspected by the Ministry in the last two years, including many at the highest risk of future collisions.
- Most roadside inspections are performed by Ministry enforcement officers on provincial highways. This allows "local haulers" to avoid inspection by operating primarily on municipal and urban roads. The audit found that from 2014 to 2018, approximately 68% of collisions involving trucks belonging to Ontario-registered carriers occurred on municipal roads.
- The Ministry approves organizations, including carriers that operate commercial vehicles, to train and test their own drivers for commercial-vehicle driver licences. The audit found that between 2014/15 and 2018/19, drivers tested by carriers had a pass rate of 95%, compared with just 69% at Ministry-licensed DriveTest centres. One-quarter of the carriers that tested their own drivers ranked among the worst 1% of all carriers for at-fault collisions.

- The Ministry has no information on the annual inspection of commercial vehicles performed by the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station (MVIS) garages or the certificates they issued. As a result, the Ministry has not investigated many instances where MVIS garages ordered excessive quantities of paper-based, blank inspection certificates. MVIS garages inspect and certify vehicles, but the Ministry has no automated controls to flag excessive ordering of inspection certificates. This creates the risk that garages could be distributing or selling the inspection certificates they order but do not need, or are issuing certificates without actually inspecting vehicles.
- The Ministry does not require Service Ontario to ask for proof of a valid annual or semi-annual inspection certificate when renewing commercial vehicle licence plates. Enforcement officers found almost 7,500 instances where commercial vehicles did not have a valid annual or semi-annual inspection certificate during 2017 and 2018, indicating a significant problem.

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