

MEDIA RELEASE



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TRUCK DRIVERS MUST BE FIT FOR DUTY AFTER THE WEEKEND: NEW STUDY

Australia's leading truck insurer, NTI, has called for trucking operators to establish that their drivers are fit for duty, particularly after the weekend.

The NTI's Manager of Industry Affairs and Customer Relations, Owen Driscoll, made the call when he briefed the 2009 Australian Trucking Convention on the results of NTI's new truck accident study. The study examined 325 major truck crashes that occurred in 2007.

The survey revealed that 89 per cent of all fatigue-related truck accidents occurred on outbound journeys within 500 kilometres of the point of departure. One in four fatigue-related crashes occurred on a Monday, the first day of the working week for many,

"This is compelling evidence that drivers are fatigued before they commence their working week. This undoubtedly brings into question just what effect, if any, the recently introduced driving hours reforms will bring," Mr Driscoll said.

"The result is a screaming message highlighting the importance of establishing a driver's fitness for duty, particularly following a weekend's extended rest break."

The survey, which was compiled by NTI's National Centre of Truck Accident Research, showed fatigue and inappropriate speed accounted for almost 50 per cent of all serious truck accidents on the nation's roads.

"The study revealed that inappropriate speed was the leading cause, accounting for more than one in four truck accidents," Mr Driscoll said.

"Inappropriate speed is not point-to-point speeding, but rather driving within the speed limit at a speed too fast for the road's condition.

"To back this conclusion up, the survey found that 77 per cent of accidents caused by inappropriate speed involved roll-overs on corners or roundabouts.

"The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that a proportion of drivers feel under pressure because of tight schedules or loading delays at the start of their shift," Mr Driscoll said.

The Australian Trucking Convention brings together leaders in the field to discuss the issues facing the trucking industry today. Highlights still to come include talks on labour market challenges and the National Trucking Industry Awards. The convention continues until tomorrow afternoon.

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PLEASE NOTE: As part of the Australian Trucking Convention, Owen Driscoll will be available for interviews at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre today (Thursday) and Friday. Contact the ATA communications team on the numbers above for more information.

National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry