

# **Speed Limiter Survey Results**

## **Final Report**

Prepared By:  
OOIDA Foundation  
August 2007

## Table of Contents

Page 1 .....	Methodology
Page 2 .....	Questions 1-6 of survey
Page 3 .....	Questions 7-9 of survey
Page 4 .....	Analysis of questions 1-4
Page 5 .....	Analysis of questions 4-5
Page 6 .....	Analysis of questions 6-7
Page 7 .....	Analysis of questions 8-9
Page 8 .....	Appendix A: Copy of Survey
Page 9 .....	Appendix B: Cover Letter

## **Methodology**

The drivers were selected using the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association data base identifying those drivers who were listed as hired drivers. There were 15,382 drivers identified as hired drivers often referred to as company drivers. A survey was sent to all those drivers along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey. A return envelope was included in the mailing. The return envelopes were addressed to OOIDA Foundation, Inc. The data from the survey was collected via direct mail. There were a total of 3,422 completed surveys returned and entered into the data base. There were 55 surveys returned with wrong addresses making the total surveyed 15,327. This represents a 22.3% return rate and it is these results that will be noted in this analysis.

## **The OOIDA Foundation**

The OOIDA Foundation is a research and safety foundation, and a subsidiary of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association. Established in 1992, the OOIDA Foundation is dedicated to adding to the store of knowledge concerning the trucking industry from the viewpoint of the driver. The foundation has performed many mail survey projects to assess trucker opinions and behaviors for governmental agencies and associated universities. The OOIDA Foundation is a full-service mail survey research supplier offering professional services and data processing to ensure complete control over project quality, schedule and integrity. The OOIDA Foundation verifies and attests to the objectivity and integrity of all information contained in this report and the methodology applied in acquiring it.



Question 7: When looking for a company to drive for, is the fact that a company has speed limiters an important part of your consideration?

- A. Yes 2042      B. No 621      C. Not a factor 739

Question 8: If all things were equal, would you rather drive for a company that has speed limiters or one that does not?

- A. Does 120      B. Does Not 2,780      C. Not a factor 500

Question 9: In your opinion what is the best way to enforce speeding regulations by large trucks? Please rank from 1-6; with 1 being the best and 6 being the least effective.

	Rank	Number of responses
A. Speed Limiters	4	1,339
B. Increased enforcement	2	1,579
C. More rigid standards for obtaining a CDLs	3	1,508
D. Lower speed limits	5	1,301
E. Uniform speed limits	1	1,778
F. Other; Specify	6	894

## Analysis of speed limiter survey:

Question 1: Who do you drive for?

Number of different trucking companies listed. 2,080

Question 2: Concerns the number of fleets that already have speed limiters as part of their fleet's equipment.

Number of companies that have speed limiters = 1,264

Percentage of companies that already have speed limiters = 60.8%

Question 3: Speed limiters can be set at whatever speed the carrier or the manufacturer decides. Question 3 is broken down into the speed setting significant to the speed limiter petition.

Number of settings 60-62 mph= 73      Percentage = 6.3

Number of settings 63-65 mph = 583      Percentage = 50.6

Number of settings 66-68 mph = 497      Percentage = 43.1

Question 4: It is known from surveys conducted previously of the company driver population of OOIDA the majority of company drivers are paid by the mile (50.2%) or by the trip (22%) in 2004. There are concerns that when speed is limited the driver may try to "make up" for lost time when on highways or roads where the speed limit is less than the speed limiter setting by exceeding the posted limits. Part one shows the breakdown for the entire population that responded. Part two is a breakdown by the specific speed limiter settings germane to the petition in gradations of 3 mph.

Do you exceed the speed limit on roads or in areas where the speed limit is less than the speed limiter setting to make up for lost time?

Never	582	Percentage	26.2
Sometimes	1,148	Percentage	51.8
Usually	370	Percentage	16.7
Always	<u>117</u>	Percentage	5.3
	2,217		

Part Two:		
60-62 mph setting:		Percentage
Never	17	23.3 %
Sometimes	32	43.8 %
Usually	21	28.8 %
Always	3	4.1 %

63-65 mph setting:		Percentage
Never	130	22.3 %
Sometimes	289	49.6 %
Usually	126	21.6 %
Always	38	6.5 %

66-68 mph setting:		Percentage
Never	99	19.9 %
Sometimes	262	52.7 %
Usually	102	20.5 %
Always	34	6.8 %

Since 68 mph is the speed limiter provision that FMCSA and NHTSA has been asked to consider for rulemaking the results will be on those drivers who drive vehicles limited to 68 mph or less. The results indicate that there is a tendency to try and make up time lost when operating a vehicle that has a speed limiter. This is a significant concern especially in light of the fact that the 2005 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) shows that 76.4% of all fatal crashes occur at speeds of 55 mph or less. That same FARS report identifies that 74.8% of all fatal crashes occur on two lane roads where the speed limit is usually limited to less than 55-60 mph.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to speculate that if an hourly rate were paid to the driver the perceived need to make up for lost time would no longer be a motivating force.

Question 5: Carriers often lease on owner-operators to haul their freight. Some carriers require that those owner-operators also limit their truck speed. More often than not, unless under a lease-purchase plan with the carrier, the owner-operator is unwilling to set speed limiters on their trucks. Question 5 asks if the company drivers know if owner-operators leased to the carrier are required to use speed limiters identical to the trucks they drive.

	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	222	9.8%
No	931	41.0%
Don't know	529	23.3%
N/A	588	25.9%

---

<sup>1</sup> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2005) Traffic Safety Facts



Question 8: This question asks the drivers if all things were equal would they rather drive for a company that does have speed limiters or one that does not? Knowing that many large carriers have speed limiters already and often pay better or have better benefits it is often seen as a tradeoff, so the question gets at preference of drivers.

Does 120 Does Not 2,780 Not a factor 500

Question 9: This is another ranking question that asks the drivers to rank from 1-6 their opinions on the best way to enforce speeding regulations on large trucks, in addition a 7<sup>th</sup> choice is given, Other; Specify, allowing drivers to express other enforcement methods not mentioned. The number 1 was the best and 6 was the least effective. The majority of drivers used the rankings 1-6 but again, as in question 6, many repeated a number more than once. In those instances the numbers were not used in this analysis.

	Rank	Number of responses	Percentage
Speed limiters	4	1,339	16.1 %
Increased enforcement	2	1,579	18.9 %
More rigid standards for CDLs	3	1,508	18.1 %
Lower speed limits	5	1,301	15.6 %
Uniform speed limits	1	1,778	21.3 %
Other; Specify	6	894	10.7 %

It is interesting to note that drivers are concerned about speeding and point to the need for uniform speed limits and increased enforcement as the top two choices for controlling speed.

## Appendix A: Survey

As most of you know, the maximum speed any vehicle will travel is affected by a combination of design factors including gear ratios, tire size, and a “governor” that prevents damage to the engine.

For the purpose of this survey the term “speed limiter” refers to a separate device that restricts a vehicle’s top speed regardless of the design capabilities.

1. What trucking company do you drive for?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the truck you drive equipped with a speed limiter?

A. Yes       B. No

(If you answered YES, please answer all questions. If you answered No, go to # 6)

3. What is the maximum speed setting of the speed limiter?

A. \_\_\_\_\_mph

4. If the vehicle you drive is limited to a speed that is less than the speed limit on many highways you travel, do you exceed the speed limit on roads or in areas where the speed limit is less than the speed limiter setting to make up for lost time?

A. Never       B. Sometimes       C. Usually       D. Always

5. Does the company also speed limit owner-operators’ trucks?

A. Yes       B. No       C. Don’t Know       D. N/A

6. Please rank what concerns you have about speed limiters. Rank from 1-6; with 1 being the primary concern and 6 being the least concern. If you have no concerns about speed limiters please mark “No concerns” with a 0.

\_\_\_\_A. No Concerns

\_\_\_\_D. Increased congestion

\_\_\_\_B. More frequent passing by automobiles

\_\_\_\_E. Being rear-ended

\_\_\_\_C. Need to drive longer to get miles

\_\_\_\_F. Lack of passing speed

\_\_\_\_G. Other; Specify \_\_\_\_\_

7. When looking for a company to drive for, is the fact that a company has speed limiters an important part of your consideration?

A. Yes       B. No       C. Not a factor

8. If all things were equal, would you rather drive for a company that has speed limiters or one that does not?

A. Does       B. Does not       C. Not a factor

9. In your opinion what is the best way to enforce speeding regulations by large trucks? Please rank from 1-6; with 1 being the best and 6 being the least effective.

\_\_\_\_A. Speed limiters

\_\_\_\_D. Lower speed limits

\_\_\_\_B. Increased enforcement

\_\_\_\_E. Uniform speed limits

\_\_\_\_C. More rigid standards for obtaining CDLs

\_\_\_\_F. Other; Specify \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B**

Letter to members:

Dear member:

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration are requesting comments in response to two petitions, one filed by the American Trucking Associations, and the other by a group of large trucking companies. While each petition takes a different approach, they ask for the same result—to eventually limit trucks with a weight rating in excess of 26,000 pounds to a maximum speed of 68 miles per hour.

The ATA and some of their members want the federal government to impose regulations that require truck speeds to be controlled electronically, typically through the use of the electronic control module, in this case commonly referred to as a “speed-limiter.” At this point, the agencies are simply asking questions and soliciting public comments to supplement a review of the material presented by the petitioners, along with an evaluation of data or other relevant information. The response the agencies receive will determine whether this initiative goes to the next step.

The OOIDA Foundation wants your opinions about the use and effects of speed-limiters in your day-to-day operation of the vehicle. Regardless of how you feel about controlling maximum truck speeds or what that speed should be, your opinions are extremely important in this debate. The American Transportation Research Institute, the research arm of ATA, is also conducting a survey focusing on trucking company speed limiter use and the perspective of company management.

Please complete the enclosed survey and return it in the envelope provided. Your opinions are completely anonymous and will be combined with the responses of your fellow OOIDA members. The deadline to submit comments to the agencies on this issue is March 27, 2007, so we need your response by no later than March 13th, in order to combine and tabulate the results.

Thank You,

Tom Weakley  
Director of Operations, Foundation