

Speed Limiters will negatively impact safety

Speed limiters are electronic controlled modules that interact with a truck engine and are capable of limiting the maximum speed of a truck. OOIDA opposes a mandate for speed limiters as such a mandate would increase the interaction between large trucks and passenger vehicles, thereby decreasing overall highway safety. Despite the best efforts of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, there is no clear evidence which supports that the use of speed limiters will improve safety. There is in fact data however which demonstrates that high-speed related truck crashes are rare events and that the reduction of both speed and power can have negative effects on safety.

Table 1: Fatal Crashes Involving Large Trucks by Speed Limit, 2012-2014

Speed	2012		2013		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
25 mph or less	73	2.1%	88	2.5%	78	2.3%
30 - 35 mph	236	6.8%	271	7.6%	236	6.9%
40 - 45 mph	519	14.9%	493	13.9%	452	13.2%
50 - 55 mph	1,217	34.9%	1,276	35.9%	1,174	34.3%
60 - 65 mph	701	20.1%	727	20.5%	751	21.9%
70 - 75 mph	597	17.1%	585	16.5%	621	18.1%
80 - 85 mph	7	0.2%	12	0.3%	9	0.3%
No statutory limit	25	0.7%	33	0.9%	13	0.4%
Unknown	111	3.2%	69	1.9%	90	2.6%
Total	3,486	100.0%	3,554	100.0%	3,424	100.0%
Average Speed Limit	55.2 mph		55.0 mph		55.9 mph	

Studies have demonstrated that a higher variance of vehicle speeds in traffic flow increases the risk of an accident, and speed limiters cause speed variance. Regardless of the average speed on the highway, the greater a driver deviates from the average speed, the greater his chances are of being involved in an accident. The frequency of interactions with other vehicles by a vehicle traveling 10-mph below the posted speed limit is 227% higher than when moving at traffic speed.¹ Thus low speed drivers are more likely to be involved in accidents than high-speed drivers are, as 80% of rear-end collisions involving a large truck and passenger vehicle, which result in a fatality, are caused by the passenger vehicle rear-ending the truck.²

¹ Steven L. Johnson, *Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Large Truck-Automobile Speed Limit Differentials on Rural Interstate Highways*, Mack-Blackwell Transportation Center, University of Arkansas (2005), pg. 98.

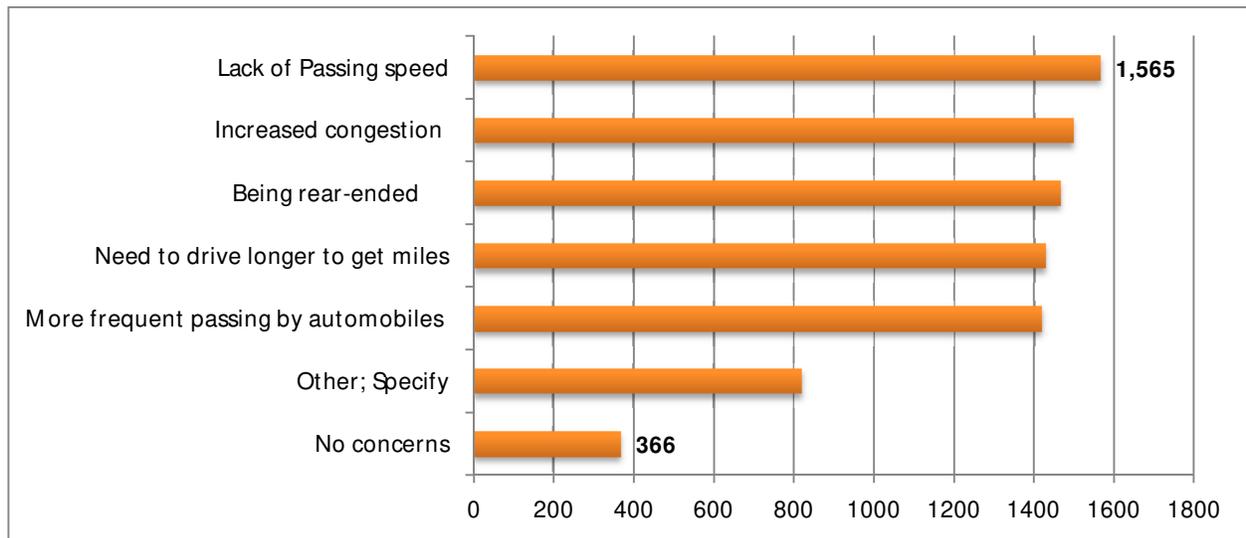
² Transport Topics, "Trucker Driver Fault: What are the Odds?" Transport Topics (April 22, 2013), <http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=31803&page=2> (accessed April 22, 2013)

Additionally, there is a serious safety concern that a speed limiter mandate will incentivize truckers to speed in lower speed limit zones, including construction zones in order to make up for lost time. According to a survey of safety managers, 88% stated that their drivers travel faster than normal in lower speed areas to make up time.³

Table 2: Fatal Crashes by Work Zone, 2010-2014

Work Zone	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Not a work zone	3,153	3,214	3,354	3,395	3,241
In work zone	117	145	132	146	183
Unknown	1	6	0	0	0
Total	3,271	3,365	3,486	3,541	3,424
Percentage of fatal work-zone crashes	22.5%	27.2%	23.8%	27.7%	30.1%

When OOIDA members were asked to rank their concerns about speed limiters, the top two issues were lack of passing speed and increased congestion. Research has demonstrated that speed differential between trucks and other vehicles creates traffic congestion, thereby expanding safety concerns while also increasing the environmental footprint of large trucks.



Rather than a speed limiter mandate to prevent speeding, carriers could modify the fundamental and structural problems that create incentives for speeding, such as compensation of drivers by mile and lack of pay for substantial amounts of time spent waiting to load and unload. Speeding is often a function of the economics of trucking. The perceived need to speed will be eliminated if carriers paid per hour or increase per mile compensation for compliant driving.

³ Transportation Research Board, *CTBSSP Synthesis 16: Safety Impacts of Speed Limiter Device Installations on Commercial Trucks and Buses*, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (2008), pg. 20.

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