



A number of statehouses today are considering lane restrictions for commercial motor vehicles with the assumption that it will reduce congestion and travel delays while also improving safety, pollution, and economic activity. Research has demonstrated however that truck lane restrictions are difficult to enforce, accelerate pavement deterioration, create speed differentials, and increase merging conflicts and crashes.

In 2004, Virginia enacted a law to restrict all trucks from the left-most lane of interstates with three or more lanes by direction when the speed limit is 65 mph or higher, along all of I-81, and in northern Virginia. Thus the Virginia Transportation Research Council initiated a study in order to determine the law's effectiveness on mobility and safety. The study ultimately concluded that safety was degraded on high-volume roads but recognized the need to re-examine the safety analysis to ensure that the findings were not a product of growing congestion or other confounding factors. The VTRC conducted a reevaluation in 2009.

The original analysis estimated that the truck lane restrictions caused the total number of truck-involved crashes to be 37% higher than anticipated and the number of truck-involved fatality or injury crashes to be 27% higher than expected. After utilizing empirical analysis to screen out crashes that were not influenced by the restriction, the VTRC confirmed that crashes were higher than expected after the restriction was put in place and thus were not merely products of growing congestion. In fact, the study recommended that the Virginia Department of Transportation pursue legislation to remove truck lane restrictions on high-volume interstates with three or more lanes in each direction.<sup>1</sup> The following research studies have further confirmed the dangers of implementing truck lane restrictions:

- I-95 Broward County, Florida – Over-all crash rate increased by 6.3%
- I-20, Louisiana – inconclusive but crashes increased along with vehicle miles traveled
- I-95, Near Washington D.C. – Crash rate increased 13.8%
- New Jersey Turnpike – Crash rate in mixed traffic lanes was approximately double that of passenger vehicle-only lanes

Most other research has found very little, if any, improvement in mean travel speed and travel delays due to truck lane restrictions, while other studies have shown that concentrating trucks into certain lanes accelerates road damage in those lanes. A Louisiana State University study conducted in 2009 found that restricting vehicles from the left-most lane on a facility with four lanes reduces the life of the pavement by 7%, while restricting vehicles from the two left-most lanes would reduce the pavement life by 34%.<sup>2</sup>

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association is opposed to restricting trucks from any lanes of traffic as this inevitably blocks entrance and exit ramps and impedes motorists from safely entering and exiting the roadway. Lane restrictions create a “barrier effect,” decreasing safety by creating dangerous merging and lane-changing conditions, more aggressive driving, and ultimately increasing crashes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Fontaine et al., *Evaluation of Truck Lane Restrictions in Virginia: Phase II*, VTRC (2009)

<sup>2</sup> Mini Radhakrishnan and Chester G. Wilmot, *Impact of Left Lane Truck Restriction Strategies on Multilane Highways in Louisiana—A Literature Review*, Louisiana State University (2009)

**OOIDA**

Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Foundation, Inc.  
A subsidiary of Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Inc.

1 NW OOIDA Drive • PO Box 1000 • Grain Valley, MO 64029 • Tel: (816) 229-5791 • Fax: (816) 427-4468  
e-mail: [foundation@ooida.com](mailto:foundation@ooida.com) • website: [www.ooidafoundation.org](http://www.ooidafoundation.org)