

Is safety being served?

OOIDA Foundation research shows CSA safety measurements flawed when a close look is paid to motor carriers equipped with speed limiters and electronic on-board recorders

By Jami Jones, managing editor

Every move a federal agency makes to further regulate or enforce on the trucking industry, you can bet that it is wrapped up with the argument that it is all about safety.

But are these agencies going about it right?

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration points at the Compliance, Safety, Accountability Motor Carrier Safety Measurement System as its silver bullet for identifying at-risk motor carriers for enforcement. That assertion is challenged by the trucking community and members of Congress alike.

Additionally, the agency is entertaining the idea of mandating electronic on-board recorders in all trucks – to improve compliance with the regulations and thereby safety. FMCSA's sister agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, has taken the lead on the rulemaking to impose speed limiters on all newly manufactured trucks. Again, the claim is that it will make trucks safer.

Both the EOBR proposed mandate and speed limiter proposal are pushed aggressively by many large motor carriers. Their claim? Safety.

Putting it to the test

The OOIDA Foundation conducted a study into the publicly accessible CSA data on several large motor carriers that use speed limiters and EOBRs.

SPEEDING Speed limiter/EOBR Group	Speeding violations Per Driver
Swift Transportation Corporation	0.11
Werner Enterprises	0.10
C.R. England Inc.	0.10
U.S. Xpress Inc.	0.09
Knight Transportation Inc.	0.09
Schneider National Carriers Inc.	0.07
J.B. Hunt Transport Inc.	0.07
Maverick Transportation LLC	0.04
No Speed limiter/EOBR Group	Speeding violations Per Driver
Dart Transit Company	0.11
Bennett Motor Express LLC	0.08
Landstar Ranger Inc.	0.07
Landstar Inway Inc.	0.07

Values represent violations/power unit

CRASH RATES Speed limiter/EOBR Group	Crashes Per Power Unit
Werner Enterprises	0.13
C.R. England Inc.	0.11
Swift Transportation Corporation	0.10
U.S. Xpress Inc.	0.09
Schneider National Carriers Inc.	0.08
Knight Transportation Inc.	0.07
J.B. Hunt Transport Inc.	0.06
Maverick Transportation LLC	0.05
No Speed limiter/EOBR Group	Crashes Per Power Unit
Dart Transit Company	0.07
Bennett Motor Express LLC	0.06
Landstar Ranger Inc.	0.05
Landstar Inway Inc.	0.05

Values represent violations/power unit

The large motor carriers selected for review were those that have been very active in pursuing a mandate for installation of speed limiters and EOBRs.

“The general consensus of these carriers and FMCSA is that high scores on the Behavioral Analysis Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS) are directly related to safety on the highways,” the research brief states.

The Foundation researched the BASIC compliance rankings and underlying inspection and crash data of the following motor carriers that have speed limiters and EOBRs on their trucks:

- Werner Enterprises Inc.
- Schneider National
- J.B. Hunt Transport Inc.
- Swift Transportation Co.
- C.R. England Inc.
- U.S. Xpress
- Knight Transportation Inc., and
- Maverick Transportation LLC

As a comparison group, the OOIDA Foundation selected a group of non-asset light motor carriers that predominantly use owner-operators. Those researched were:

- Dart Transit Co.
- Bennett Motor Express LLC
- Landstar Inway Inc., and
- Landstar Ranger Inc.

It should be noted that Dart has begun using EOBRs, but does not require them of their

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