Large Trucks Involved in Fatal Incidents in Illinois from 1992 through 2000

Because of their size, weight, and the amount of travel, large trucks are involved in a significant number of fatal incidents in Illinois. These trucks (commercial vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds and having three or more axles) include delivery trucks, dump trucks, semi-trailers, tractor trailers and trailer trucks. The Illinois Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) tracks fatalities that occur on Illinois roads or in work sites in which large trucks are involved. This article presents data gathered between 1992 and 2000.

During the nine-year period, Illinois CFOI documented 167 fatalities involving trucks (108 semi-trailers and 59 delivery trucks, dump trucks and other types of trucks). Of the 167 fatalities, 132 involved the driver of the truck and 35 involved non-motorists. A total of 119 (71.3 percent) occurred among individuals employed by Illinois-based companies, while 48 fatalities occurred among employees from other states.

The majority of the cases were male (159), white (152) and between the ages of 25 and 64 (141). The medical causes of the fatalities involved in the incidents were multiple traumatic injuries (43.7 percent), internal injuries (20.4), intra-cranial injuries (19.2 percent) and smoke inhalation (7.8 percent). The parts of the body most affected in these incidents were injuries to multiple body parts (47.3 percent), the trunk (21 percent), the head (19.8 percent), the entire body (10.8 percent) and the neck (1.2 percent).

CFOI data also identified fatalities by the date and time of the occurrence. Following traffic patterns, most fatalities took place during the morning and afternoon hours, with 70 percent occurring between 4 a.m. and 4 p.m. More specifically, 25.1 percent occurred between 8 a.m. and noon, 23.3 percent occurred between noon and 4 p.m., and 21.6 percent occurred between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. The remaining 30 percent occurred between 4 p.m. and 4 a.m. Regarding the time of year, most fatalities took place during the fall and summer months, with 29.3 percent occurring from September through November, 27 percent occurring from June through August, and 25.7 percent occurring from March through May. However, only 18 percent occurred from December through February, months when inclement weather would have been expected to play a more prominent role. The Illinois CFOI program will continue to monitor fatalities involving large trucks through its surveillance system. The information is shared with state and federal transportation departments to improve road safety and to make Illinois a better place in which to live, work and travel.