



ROAD TALK

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Just Another Any Old Work Day

Until...



Imagine you're behind the wheel in the bright sunshine of a bustling highway on just another any old work day. You're cruising along in the number 3 lane of four and closing in on the vehicle ahead when suddenly, that vehicle brakes hard without warning. In a split second your heart and mind shift gears as you realize a collision is imminent.

This scenario isn't just hypothetical; it's based on a real collision by one of our members. For a bit of valuable insight into the importance of defensive driving, envision yourself in the driver's seat of this scenario, and answer what would you have done?

At this point, it's all instinct as there's little to no time to look beside or behind you. If your instinct is to hit the brakes and brace for impact, you might find yourself in a devastating rearend crash with the vehicle ahead and the vehicle behind. Alternatively, veering left or right might seem like a quick fix, but it could result in collateral damage to other vehicles nearby. And if fear or distraction paralyzed you from taking any action, the consequences are likely to be catastrophic.

In the actual scene, the driver chose to brake and turn left, and the outcome was far from ideal. The driver over-steered and collided with the vehicle in the number two lane, caromed off and back into the the hard-braking vehicle. Additionally, the first collision then led to a separate and additional crash involving one other vehicle.

So, what's the key to avoiding such harrowing situations on the road? While there is no magic solution that applies to all scenarios, the best answer lies in creating a buffer of space between you and the vehicle ahead. At highway speeds, experts recommend maintaining a distance of 3-4 seconds. This extra time allows you the crucial moments needed to better react to unexpected events like this.

So, as you embark on your next trip, remember the goal is to return home safely – as the saying goes “better safe than sorry”.

Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and be prepared to react calmly and decisively. Your vigilance could mean the difference between another any old work day or something life-altering.

Cannabis to lower to Schedule III drug

May 21, 2024 – The Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to transfer cannabis (marijuana) from schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to schedule III of the CSA.

The DEA's actions come following a determination from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that cannabis has a moderate to low potential for abuse, an accepted medical use in the United States and a moderate or low potential for physical dependence or a high potential for psychological dependence. Additionally, the HHS recommended that the drug be rescheduled.

Schedule III drugs, substances or chemicals are drugs with a moderate to low potential for physical and psychological dependence; examples include ketamine and anabolic steroids.



testing for all professional drivers and transportation workers may exclude cannabis.

There is no expectation that rescheduling cannabis will change any use policies for commercial trucking as they are classified as a safety-sensitive occupation by the USDOT. Current regulations state that drivers shall not report for duty or be on duty “when the driver uses any drug or substance identified in Schedule I,” or when the driver uses any non-Schedule I drug that is listed in other schedules without appropriate medical instructions. However, HHS guidelines for workplace drug testing allow employers to test only for those drugs listed in Schedule I or II of the CSA. By moving cannabis to Schedule III, testing for all professional drivers and transportation workers may exclude cannabis.

According to research by the National Transportation Safety Board, marijuana and alcohol remain the most-detected drugs in impaired driving crashes resulting in serious or fatal injuries.

Comments are now being accepted and must be submitted electronically or postmarked on or before July 22, 2024. Federal Register document number: 2024-11137 (www.federalregister.gov).





FUEL UPDATE

Renewable Diesel

found to reduce 2x more CO₂ than BEVs

Is there still a viable option for internal combustion diesel engines? The answer is a resounding yes according to a recent report by the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI).

In May 2022, the ATRI compared the life-cycle carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of petroleum diesel fueled trucks to alternative fueled trucks. Their findings included a potential 30% decrease in life-cycle CO₂ per truck through the use of battery electric vehicle (BEV) trucks and a 67.3% decrease through the use of renewable diesel (RD) in existing Class 8 trucks.

RD is a fuel that is produced to be “chemically identical” to petroleum diesel; thus, RD can be mixed with petroleum diesel in any amount or used as a standalone, drop-in fuel in a traditional diesel truck without consequences.

A second ATRI study, published in December 2022, looked at the technical and electric infrastructure-related challenges of shifting to BEV trucks. That report identified substantial barriers to implementation including:

- Insufficient electricity generation, transmission and distribution in the U.S.;
- The need for a widely accessible truck charging network; and
- Complications related to the mining and processing of battery materials

Now, the ATRI has taken a more robust look at the factors and benefits of using RD as an alternative to BEV in its research titled Renewable Diesel – A Catalyst for Decarbonization.

Renewable Diesel is a biofuel (not fossil) and represents an alternative and/or supplement to petroleum diesel. Biofuels are made from plant- and animal-based products and waste streams that are converted into a usable fuel. Biofuels are considered renewable since they are derived from organic material that can be grown – such as soybean, corn oil and even algae which would help to satisfy those that fear competition with food sourcing.

In the U.S., California leads the push for zero-emission vehicles. In its current long-term regulatory focus for heavy-duty trucks, zero “tailpipe” emissions not necessarily lifecycle emissions is highlighted. This essentially limits the trucking industry to a few options. All the while, an increasing number of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) are required to be brought to the new truck market until a no new internal combustion mandate in 2036 for class 4-8 trucks.

So what can be done? Well, let’s take a look at the European Union’s (EU) example, the EU provides member states a choice of decarbonization options. The Council of the EU has stated that “while the strengthened CO₂ reduction targets will accelerate the uptake of ZEVs, a significant part of the stock of heavy-duty vehicles on the roads will remain internal combustion engine vehicles”. Recognizing ZEV challenges, the EU chose to raise the overall renewable energy consumption to 42.5% by 2030 across all sectors instead of a mandate for ZEVs.

The bottom line is that while we have a serious emissions problem we also need to keep freight moving. RD use decreases CO₂ emissions significantly when compared to petroleum diesel. However, an across the board ZEV trucks mandate would result in higher overall CO₂ emissions compared to policies and programs to increase the production and use of RD.

Considering that BEVs produce substantially more CO₂ emissions over their life-cycle than do internal combustion RD, why isn’t there a bigger effort towards renewable fuels to supplement ZEVs? Shouldn’t all CO₂ emissions be considered – not just at the tailpipe?

Visit ATRI at www.truckingresearch.org



According to the U.S. Energy Information Association (EIA),

The spot price of Brent crude oil averaged \$84.4 per barrel (b) in May down \$4/b from April EIA estimates that Brent crude oil prices will average \$90 per barrel in 2024.

U.S. Average monthly prices

	Oil \$/b	Diesel \$/g	Gas \$/g
Jan	\$80.1/b	\$3.85/g	\$3.08/g
Feb	\$83.5/b	\$4.04/g	\$3.21/g
Mar	\$85.4/b	\$4.00/g	\$3.43/g
Apr	\$88.8/b	\$4.00/g	\$3.61/g
May	\$84.4/b	\$3.82/g	\$3.60/g

The 2024 hurricane season has begun. The forecast for the Atlantic is expected to be right up there with the most aggressive. Refinery disruptions due to storms – especially in the Gulf, could severely affect petroleum prices.

05/27/24



National O-H Diesel Avg



National Gasoline Avg

On-highway Diesel Fuel Prices

Region	05/27/24	04/29/24	05/29/23
East Coast	3.885	4.025	3.886
New England	4.148	4.309	4.144
Central Atlantic	4.123	4.234	4.190
Lower Atlantic	3.770	3.919	3.747
Midwest	3.633	3.882	3.781
Gulf Coast	3.478	3.657	3.555
Rocky Mtns	3.706	3.787	4.077
West Coast	4.449	4.625	4.540
California	4.985	5.216	4.810

Prices listed above are diesel averages in dollars per gallon.

Up-to-date statistics are available from the Department of Energy at www.eia.gov.



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Train horn lawsuit

Trucker Loses \$1.8 million

A jury awarded a Mississippi construction worker \$1.8 million in his lawsuit against a truck driver who blasted an actual three-trumpet Union Pacific train horn that was hooked to his rig.

According to court documents, In 2020, Robert Kelly claimed that the truck's horn caused him to lose his hearing and the jury agreed.

Court documents showed that Jerry Garland honked at Kelly because he was standing in front of his rig. Garland blasted his horn for around 10 seconds, to which Kelly claims caused permanent hearing loss.

Union Pacific officials told the court that a three-trumpet horn's sound output is 145 decibels, more than a jet engine, which is around 140 decibels.

Kelly was awarded \$1.5 million for pain and suffering, but due to Mississippi tort law, non-economic damages are capped at \$500,000 reducing the payout to roughly \$800,000.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the train horn itself is a worksite violation and the maximum safe decibel level is 115 without hearing protection.



New Standard: Automatic Emergency Braking

April 29, 2024 – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) finalized a new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard making automatic emergency braking (AEB), including pedestrian AEB, standard on all passenger cars and light trucks by September 2029.

In June 2023, NHTSA and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration announced a separate notice of proposed rulemaking that would require heavy vehicles, including tractor trailers, to have AEB. The NHTSA notes that the two administrations are in the process of finalizing that requirement.