Do Speed Limiters Reduce Truck Crashes?

Friday, October 13, 2017

A recent study conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) found that speed-related, at-fault truck crashes dropped by 73 percent after mandatory speed limiter technology legislation took effect in Ontario, Canada.

Other findings of the study include:

- Post 2009, large truck drivers produced fewer at-fault speed collisions relative to all at-fault driver actions
- There is no evidence to suggest worse collision outcomes for large truck drivers post 2009
- The percentage of truck drivers that were struck from the rear stayed more-or-less the same from pre- to post-legislation (10.03 percent of total collisions 2006-2008 and 10.47 percent 2010-2012), whereas for other drivers the rate increased (18.6 percent 2006-2008 and 21.3 percent 2010-2012)

The year-long study dispelled opponents’ position that requiring large trucks to slow down would lead to rear-end crashes. The study further discounted the contention that speed limiters would cause truck drivers to adjust their driving habits to compensate for lost time resulting from slower driving.

The study found no evidence that speed limiters contributed to an increase in collisions involving truck drivers, including rear-end crashes.

The Ontario Trucking Association, a strong proponent of mandatory speed limiters, worked closely with the Ontario government to get the speed limiter rule enacted.

In the United States, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) are proposing similar speed limiter regulations.

NHTSA is proposing to establish a new federal motor vehicle safety standard (FMVSS) requiring that each new multipurpose passenger vehicle, truck bus, and school bus with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds be equipped with a speed limiting device. The proposed FMVSS would require each of those vehicles to have the device set to a speed not greater than the speed to be specified in the final rule. Also, the vehicles must be equipped with the means to read the speed settings through on-board diagnostic connections.

FMCSA is proposing a complementary federal motor carrier safety regulation (FMCSR) requiring each commercial motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds to be equipped with a speed limiting device that meets the requirements of the proposed FMVSS at the time of manufacture. Motor carriers would be required to maintain the speed limiting devices for the service life of the vehicle.

Based on the agencies’ review of available data, limiting the speed of commercial vehicles weighing over 26,000 pounds would reduce the severity of crashes and reduce the resulting fatalities and injuries.

However, President Trump’s executive order moratorium on new administrative rules will likely prevent or delay implementation of a final speed limiter rule for the foreseeable future, which will needlessly endanger the public.