



NEWS RELEASE

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STATE AGENCIES PARTNER TO REDUCE CRASHES INVOLVING COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES

~ FHP and FDOT focus enforcement efforts as we enter into the holiday season ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Col. John Czernis, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol, and Col. David Dees, Director of the Department of Transportation’s office of Motor Carrier Compliance today announced that the two agencies are teaming up on a statewide traffic education and enforcement campaign. The joint initiative aims to save lives by minimizing unsafe driving acts that contribute to crashes involving large, commercial trucks and school buses. The operation is part of FHP’s *Be Smart. Drive Smart, Florida!* – a series of long-term enforcement efforts that focus on top priority traffic safety issues to reduce deaths and injuries on Florida’s roadways.

“During the operation, troopers and MCC officers will watch for unsafe drivers, especially those who contribute to collisions between passenger vehicles and large trucks or school buses,” said Czernis. “The laws apply to everyone on the road. Our goal is to promote safe driving habits, showing courtesy to others and taking proactive steps toward personal safety and that of others on the road.”

In 2008, CMVs were involved in more than 16,000 crashes that resulted in 343 fatalities. Drivers of smaller vehicles, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians are all at a considerable disadvantage when involved in collisions with large trucks. Last year, MCC officers conducted more than 126,000 commercial motor vehicle safety inspections, resulting in the removal of almost 18,000 unsafe vehicles from Florida’s roadways.

“Because of vehicle size, weight and the cargo tractor trailers haul, the impact of a crash with a commercial truck can be catastrophic. It is imperative that truck drivers obey state and federal laws and regulations meant to protect their safe passage and that of the motoring public,” Dees added. “While it is a statewide effort, we are setting our sights on the top 10 counties for Commercial Motor Vehicle crashes, six of which are in central Florida.”

All available troopers and MCC officers will be on the road tracking traffic law violators using LASER, RADAR, video cameras, motorcycles and unmarked patrol vehicles during the operation. FHP pilots will be on patrol spotting violators from the air and directing troopers on the ground to pull them over to initiate appropriate enforcement action.

One of the most important things that everyone sharing the roadways should consider is that large trucks have blind spots, known as *No-Zones*, which are around the front, back and sides of the truck. Motorists should not linger in the No-Zone and should keep in mind that if you cannot see the truck driver in the truck’s mirror, the truck driver cannot see you. Truck drivers should remember that other motorists do not know how big the No-Zone is and should pay close attention for vehicles in their No-Zone. For information on traffic safety and tips for motorists, visit the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles’ *Safety First* Web page at www.flhsmv.gov/SafetyTips/.

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