

After six years of decrease, the number of car crashes and fatalities increased last year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 33,651 people died in car accidents in 2012, compared to 32,479 in 2011. The total number of fatal crashes involving large trucks increased from 3,781 in 2011 to 3,921 in 2012. The number of people killed in large truck crashes increased by 8.9 percent and the number of people injured by 8.7 percent.

The sheer size and weight of tractor-trailers translate into a huge potential for catastrophic injuries to motor vehicle drivers and passengers. It is extremely important to review the causes of tractor-trailer accidents in order to prevent any further increases in accident statistics.

Leading causes of large truck crashes

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the NHTSA conducted a study of 963 crashes involving large trucks to determine the common causes of such accidents:

- *Aggressive driving* — a tractor-trailer driver attempting to complete a delivery or return home after finishing a trip may drive aggressively
- *Drowsy driving* — drowsy driving is an unfortunate consequence of the business of truck driving
- *Lack of maneuverability* — the large size and weight of tractor-trailers makes them very difficult to steer out of dangerous situations and on unfamiliar roads
- *Illegal lane changes* — a significant number of truck accidents are caused by trucks changing lanes without signaling or checking to make sure the lane is clear
- *Blind spots* — Trucks have large blind spots which enhances the potential for accidents
- *Speeding* - Driving too fast caused 23 percent of the accidents reviewed by the FMCSA and NHTSA study
- *Distracted driving* — Talking on a cell phone, texting someone, adjusting the radio and other distractions cause a significant number of tractor-trailer accidents
- *Prescription drugs* — a leading cause of truck crashes studied by the FMCSA and NHTSA was prescription drug use which slowed driver reaction time.

It is exceptionally noteworthy that 88 percent of the crashes studied were caused by driver's action or inaction.

Tractor-trailer crashes can cause considerable property damage in addition to catastrophic injuries to other drivers and passengers. For a consultation about the injuries you suffered in a tractor-trailer accident, contact Wilkes-Barre truck accident lawyers at Rosenn, Jenkins and Greenwald.

