

Transporting Oversized Loads

Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. Large trucks understandably weigh much more than a regular vehicle, especially when carrying a load. As a result, their total weight oftentimes surpasses 40 tons, as opposed to your regular passenger vehicle that normally weighs about 2.5 tons. Due to such circumstances, these trucks take a lot longer to come to a stop than regular vehicles, and all the more so if their cargo is not loaded evenly and properly in the back trailer.
2. Some common oversized load crash causes include:
 - **Failure to brake in time** – This type of oversize load trucking accident happens far too often. The weight of oversized loads can overwhelm even the most powerful brake systems.
 - **Rollovers** – Oversized loads must be balanced properly and closely monitored. An improperly secured oversized load can cause a rollover truck accident, leading to catastrophic injuries and deaths.
 - **Accidents caused by tire blowouts or damaged tires** – Oversized loads can put too much weight on tires. If that happens, tires can explode, leading to loss of control at the worst possible time.
 - **Jackknife accidents** – This type of dangerous crash happens when the trailer is moving at a different speed than the rest of the truck. This can cause the trailer to swing into traffic, and jackknife.
 - **Incorrect height or width accidents** – Oversized truckloads can collide with tunnel walls, bridges, buildings, and other nearby objects, causing accidents.

STATS

- According to a 3-year study conducted by AAA, between 2011 and 2014 more than 200,000 accidents were caused by loose cargo or debris falling from trucks. Two-thirds of these accidents were due to unsecured loads falling onto the road or onto vehicles. The remaining one-third were caused when drivers swerved to avoid debris that fell onto the road.
- Most deaths in large truck crashes are passenger vehicle occupants. The main problem is the vulnerability of people traveling in smaller vehicles. Trucks often weigh 20-30 times as much as passenger cars and are taller with greater ground clearance, which can result in smaller vehicles under riding trucks in crashes.
- Truck braking capability can be a factor in truck crashes. Loaded tractor-trailers take 20-40 % more distance than cars to stop, and the discrepancy is greater on wet and slippery roads or with poorly maintained brakes.
- A total of 4,119 people died in large truck crashes in 2019. 16 % of these deaths were truck occupants, 67 % were occupants of cars and other passenger vehicles, and 15 % were pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists. The number of people who died in large truck crashes was 31 % higher in 2019 than in 2009. The number of truck occupants who died was 51 % higher.
- Hazardous cargo is present in approximately 4% of the large trucks involved in fatal collisions.