

****For PSC Insiders Circle Members only****

Friday Safety Brief®

\$3.97 USD

According to Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA), half of all vehicle OOS violations found during Roadcheck 2010 were brake-related. The following reminders are provided by CVSA:

Top 10 Things You Need to Know About Brakes on Commercial Vehicles

- 1 Commercial vehicles are powered forward by fuel. They are stopped by brakes that use heat as their energy source. Brakes are vital to the safe operation of a vehicle because they enable the vehicle to stop.
- 2 Braking systems are complicated and contain many parts that need constant inspection and attention to ensure proper operation and performance.
- 3 To be able to rely on your brakes in every driving situation, they must be properly adjusted, maintained and inspected before and after every trip.
- 4 The only way to know when you have a brake adjustment problem is to measure the stroke.
- 5 Poor brake adjustment reduces the ability of the service brakes to stop a vehicle and also reduces the ability of the emergency/parking brakes to stop and/or hold a vehicle.
- 6 By far, brakes comprise the largest percentage of out-of-service violations cited during roadside inspections.
- 7 Highway warning signs are usually for automobile drivers; truck drivers must translate them for trucks.
- 8 Highway design engineers often do not know the margin of safety for trucks in their design. As a result, even if your brakes are adjusted and performing properly, when you are able to see a potential problem ahead your chances of stopping are less than that of car drivers.
- 9 Be especially careful at how you apply your brakes when driving in mountainous areas.
- 10 There are additional factors besides brakes that affect the vehicles' ability to stop:
 - Tire compound and tread depth;
 - Loading and dynamic weight shift;
 - Vehicle speed;
 - Driver condition, mental state and knowledge of surroundings;
 - Traffic congestion;
 - Pavement surface characteristics; and
 - Stopping-sight-distance.



On a multi-lane highway with moderate traffic, a tractor-trailer driven by Joe Smith was traveling in the right lane, until the driver noticed an "Exit Only" sign and moved into the center lane. At that point, the driver saw an approaching vehicle in his West Coast mirror. Without warning, the vehicle veered left, across the truck's path, and accelerated, nearly missing the front of the tractor. Another vehicle was fast approaching from behind, but Joe had neglected to check his right-side mirror so he did not see it. As the exit lane ended, that vehicle tried to move left, across the truck's path, but was not so lucky. The tractor's right front fender was struck. PREVENTABLE OR NON-PREVENTABLE? Joe received a warning letter from his safety director, charging him with a preventable accident. The ruling was reaffirmed by the accident review committee, citing that after nearly being hit by one vehicle, a professional truck driver should have immediately checked the mirrors for more trouble.