



# TRUCKIES – DON'T COME HOME 1ST..... COME HOME SAFE!!!!

Part 2 by Trevor Toohill

Well I guess I must have hit on to a bit of a hot topic last month – judging by the feedback.

I struggle every month to find something involving insurance or financial matters that will have any chance of holding your interest. Insurance is just not a riveting subject. But start talking safety and coming home in one piece and I have done my job if only just one of you has another thought about how you look after yourself out there on the road.

A whole heap of opinions were voiced and emailed and one interesting email on logbooks reflected some views and was worth repeating...

*"Just my 10c worth and you may laugh at this comment and say what ever, but I have been driving trucks for about 18 years now and what I have found to be my fatigue problem is logbooks. I can get to a job and unload, still lots of life in me to keep going, but my log book tells me I am not allowed to move for another 10 hours. So I sit there wide awake for about 6-8 of them because I cannot sleep for whatever reason. So I doze off near to finishing my 10 hour break and then wake up after 2 hours and have to start work again. I am at this stage tired and need some more sleep but can't as my log book is dictating to me when it thinks I need a sleep or not and when to start work.*

*So I get going down the road a few hours and start feeling really tired, I can't pull over for a good sleep because my logbook will not allow me to as I would not get unloaded in time for my delivery. So I have to keep pushing on. Now if I had kept going when I was still feeling good I would not have a problem with fatigue.*

*But our log books dictate our working life, which is so wrong, who tells you when you should go to sleep and when you should wake up and how long you must work for and how long you must rest for and if you work 15 minutes overtime you will lose your licence (job) and get a fine.*

*The system may work for some parts of the industry but in our part and many others the log books are a hindrance not a help. So I understand why people get fatigued when trying to work with these books and while they are so regimented like the industry you will never stop fatigue or the accidents."*

As you all appreciate log books are here to stay and now feature in the transport industries of all developed countries. The fact remains that they were introduced as a direct result of lack of driver sleep management. If preventable accidents, injuries and deaths were not occurring, then they would not have been introduced in the first place.

The thing that I am most interested in is **preventable accidents** because that is something that we all have total control over.

Drivers won't want to admit it but you can't deny the facts. Nearly 90% of single vehicle trucking accidents are caused by driver error with **driver fatigue** and **inappropriate speed for the conditions** topping the list of major causes.

**Combined these two accident causes are responsible for nearly 50% of all serious truck accidents.** (NTI 2009 Study)

The emotional and physical cost to families and the transport industry is quite staggering considering the preventable nature of the occurrences. Have a look at this list of reasons given on claim investigation reports for a number of single vehicle accidents:

- + Driver was impaired by fatigue.
- + Driver entered bend at excessive speed.
- + Driver failed to anticipate sharpness of curve.
- + Driver lost concentration/was distracted.
- + Driver drifted onto soft shoulder.
- + Driver unaware of vehicle limitations.
- + Driver overcorrected.
- + Driver unaware of load centre of gravity.
- + Driver was impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- + Driver had poor eyesight or visibility impaired.
- + Driving recklessly, angry, emotional or upset.
- + Pressure of load delivery deadlines = speeding.
- + Under inflated tyres.
- + Poorly loaded truck or trailer.
- + Collapsed suspension.
- + Brake failure.
- + Other mechanical failure.

It is impossible to avoid the fact that each and every one of these reasons was a preventable cause accident.

Driver awareness training, management, and vehicle maintenance has the role to play to control preventable accidents. They do not have to happen.

Driving safe also has other major benefits – you don't just get to come home, you get to save money on fuel, tyres, insurance premiums and excesses, maintenance and replacements and of course your reputation and image to your customers – the last thing they want to be doing is retrieving roadside freight.

Contact the team at TruckSure [www.trucksure.org.nz](http://www.trucksure.org.nz). We are available to visit you to assist in the management of these risks and to establish risk management programmes.

Please drive safe in the meantime.

If you have an opinion that you want to express on this topic you may want to drop me an email [trevor@multisure.co.nz](mailto:trevor@multisure.co.nz) I will include all responses on my blog site which can be viewed at [www.trevortoothill.blogspot.com](http://www.trevortoothill.blogspot.com) 



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*'You sit behind the wheel – we stand behind the truck'*