



## Fraser Canyon Highway Safety Corridor Facts

### The Fraser Canyon - the preferred commercial route in B.C.:

- Highway 1 through the Fraser Canyon, known to locals as the Canyon, experiences more commercial vehicle traffic than the other major highways to B.C.'s interior and north.
- Commercial transporters move consumer goods, materials and equipment through the Canyon to and from the lower mainland, linking the many cities, towns, communities and businesses in B.C.
- Highway 1 is the main artery to B.C.'s northern communities like: Williams Lake, Quesnel, Prince George and the Peace Region, and is also the most direct route to the Yukon Territories and Alaska.

### Highway 1's role as a major truck route

According to Ministry of Transportation Traffic Count statistics (1996 – 2002) for B.C.'s southern interior major highways, the Canyon has the most commercial vehicle traffic in comparison to the Coquihalla and the Hope-Princeton highways:

- Highway 1 Fraser Canyon – average of 28.20% commercial vehicles annually
- Highway 5 Coquihalla – average of 14.40% commercial vehicles annually
- Highway 3 Hope-Princeton – average of 9.10% commercial vehicles annually
- During winter months, the Canyon's traffic density increases to 40% of large commercial vehicle traffic on the road.

### Drive Smart – Share the Road with Trucks

- Statistics illustrate that 70 percent of the time non-commercial vehicles are at fault in fatal truck-car collisions. Drivers of passenger vehicles and other non-commercial vehicles do not always understand how to share the Canyon with trucks.<sup>1</sup>
- As a general rule, the larger the truck, the larger the blind spots, or “No-Zones.” Thirty-six percent of all two-vehicle crashes between a large truck and a passenger vehicle took place in these “No-Zone” areas around a truck.<sup>2</sup>

### Collisions and Crashes in the Canyon

Highway 1 experiences a higher number of truck related crashes resulting in people being killed and injured than similar stretches of Highway 3 and Highway 5. Highway 1 also has the highest number of vehicle crashes resulting in fatalities when compared to these other two highways.

<sup>1</sup> In a study of national crash data on fatal two-vehicle accidents involving a heavy truck, Daniel F. Blower of the University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) found that the actions of drivers of passenger vehicles contribute to 70% of the crashes. On the other hand, truck drivers commit driving errors in 16% of the accidents, while both drivers make errors 10% of the time. Blower, D. 1999. *The relative contribution of truck drivers and passenger-vehicle drivers to truck/passenger-vehicle traffic crashes.* Michigan University, Ann Arbor, Transportation Research Institute. 15 p. UMTRI Research Review.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Motor Carrier and Highway Safety, Information Analysis Division, Based on 1997 GES Data.

**The top six driver factors contributing to heavy commercial vehicle collisions in the Canyon include:**

- Unsafe speed
- Driving without due care
- Weather conditions
- Avoiding vehicle/pedestrian
- Insecure load
- Driving on the wrong side of the road

**The Impact of Crashes and Collisions in the Canyon**

- The impact of truck or truck-car crashes and collisions in the Canyon is detrimental to the individual(s) directly involved, and to the B.C. economy.
- At least one lane of the Canyon traffic is stopped and re-routed, and many times both directions are stopped, closing the road completely. According to RCMP Traffic Services, these stoppages will often last a minimum of four hours.

**During a four-hour stoppage, a number of agencies will investigate and manage the crash scene. If the crash or collision does not include any fatalities, the following teams will investigate:**

- Ministry of Transportation dispatches a Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement officer to investigate any possible mechanical failure or load security problems with the truck.
- RCMP dispatches a Traffic team that can consist of: Traffic Services constables, Traffic Services Sergeant/Supervisor and a Traffic Collision Analyst to investigate the crash/collision elements such as speed, road grade, angle of impact, etc.

**Other organizations are also called to truck crashes and collisions, either during or post-incident:**

- Local fire department dispatches a fire and rescue team to dispense immediate fire and rescue services.
- Local ambulance service dispatches a team to provide medical aid.
- Flagging crews are dispatched to handle the affected traffic, rerouting traffic or preventing the traffic from disturbing the investigations underway.
- Cargo clean-up crews are dispatched by the transporter's insurance company to clean up the damaged/spilled cargo.
- A truck towing company is dispatched to handle wrecked vehicles.

**Costs**

- According to the B.C. Trucking Association, the average cost of a delay is about \$60 an hour per truck.
- A four-hour stoppage could mean 5-kilometres of backup or about 600 trucks for an overall economic loss of \$120,000, not including supply chain disruptions to trucking company customers whose businesses rely on timely deliveries.
- The total financial impact of a car-truck crash in the Fraser Canyon, including emergency response, physical damage to vehicles & cargo and delays can be hundreds of thousands of dollars. These costs pale in comparison to the emotional, psychological and economic costs of fatal and injury-causing crashes which are virtually incalculable.