



Alberta Transportation Commercial Vehicle Safety



Executive Summary

February 2018

Who

Alberta Transportation

What

Follow-up performance audit

When

We conducted our field work between July and October 2017.

Learn More

transportation.alberta.ca/3.htm

Why we did this audit

The *National Safety Code* requires carriers with commercial vehicles to have a safety fitness certificate before these vehicles operate on Canadian highways. Through the *Motor Vehicle Transport Act*, Transport Canada delegates monitoring and enforcement of the code to the provinces and territories.

In Alberta, the Department of Transportation is responsible for regulating and enforcing carriers with commercial vehicles that travel within the province, wherever they are registered. The department monitors whether carriers comply with various acts, regulations and codes. When a carrier does not comply, the department can suspend the carrier's safety fitness certificate until it takes corrective measures. Non-compliance does not automatically mean there are unsafe commercial vehicles on the road. It means a carrier is not operating within all required transportation legislation.

The department has a *Progressive Intervention and Discipline Policy*, which provides guidance to department staff regarding what actions to take when carriers fail to comply with the law. When notified of non-compliance, carriers are given a reasonable period of time to remediate identified deficiencies. If a carrier still does not comply, the department will suspend its licence to operate until the carrier completes remediation.

Our 2009 audit and 2014 follow-up audit found that the department's processes to monitor and enforce safety standards for commercial vehicles were inadequate. We found the department did not:

- consistently comply with its policy to take progressive disciplinary and enforcement action against non-compliant carriers
- have a reliable process to identify and follow up on carrier-related complaints received and entered into the system by the Department of Justice and Solicitor General



The objective of this follow-up audit was to determine whether the Department of Transportation had implemented our outstanding 2009 recommendation to consistently apply its policy of progressive sanctions against carriers that persistently fail to comply with transportation legislation.

What we concluded

We conclude that the Department of Transportation was still not, as of July 1, 2017, consistently following its policy of taking timely and appropriate enforcement action against non-compliant carriers. In the eight years since our original audit, the department has made improvements to its systems. The department has improved its processes to identify and follow up on all carrier complaints received. However, we found insufficient improvement in the consistency of enforcement actions from our 2014 follow-up audit findings, and senior management was not aware of these continued inconsistencies.

Why this is important to Albertans

With economic expansion and a growing population, more commercial vehicles are on Alberta's roads than ever before. Albertans need to know that Alberta's commercial vehicle safety programs will identify high-risk carriers, deal with them appropriately, and ultimately help reduce risks while ensuring the goods transported on our highways make it to their destination.

What we examined

Our follow-up audit examined the department's processes to apply its *Progressive Intervention and Discipline Policy* on carriers that do not comply with transportation legislation. We also examined the department's process to identify and follow up on carrier complaints received through Justice and Solicitor General. Department management asserted to us prior to our follow-up that they had implemented the recommendation.

We reviewed the policies and procedures for each process and examined samples to assess if the department had implemented our recommendation.

What we found

The department is still not consistently applying its *Progressive Intervention and Discipline Policy*.

What needs to be done

We recommend for the third time that the Department of Transportation consistently comply with its policy to take disciplinary and enforcement action against non-compliant carriers.

Consequences of not taking action

Without timely and appropriate enforcement action taken against high-risk carriers, commercial vehicles that are a potential risk to public safety may continue to operate, and carriers may not believe there are meaningful consequences of being non-compliant.

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oag.ab.ca

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