

**CHECKLIST · AT THE SCENE**

COMMERCIAL TRUCK CRASH CHECKLIST

WHAT YOU CAPTURE THAT CARS DO NOT HAVE.

A trucking company's investigators can reach the scene the same day. The driver's hours, the truck's electronic data, and the carrier's identity decide these cases, and each one can be lost or overwritten within weeks. Photograph the cab, the trailer, and the paperwork, then ask the officer the two questions below.

ON THE TRUCK ITSELF

- ☐ **The USDOT number on the cab door, and any MC number**
Those numbers identify the motor carrier, its insurance, and its federal safety record. 49 CFR 390.21 requires them on both sides of the cab. Photograph the whole door.
- ☐ **The carrier name on the cab and the name on the trailer**
They are often different companies. Both can be responsible.
- ☐ **Both plates, tractor and trailer, and the trailer number**
A trailer can be owned by a third company or by the shipper.
- ☐ **The load, the placards, the tarps, and the tires**
Hazmat placards, a shifted load, worn tires, or a missing underride guard each point to a different defendant.

FROM THE DRIVER AND THE OFFICER

- ☐ **The driver's name, commercial license, and employer**
Ask whether the driver owns the truck or drives for the company on the door. The answer changes who pays.
- ☐ **Ask the officer to note the driver's hours and the electronic logbook**
Federal rules cap driving at 11 hours after 10 hours off under 49 CFR 395.3. The electronic logging device records it, and the carrier only has to keep the record for six months.
- ☐ **Ask the officer to record the carrier's insurance, not only the driver's**
The federal minimum for most interstate carriers is \$750,000 under 49 CFR 387.9. That policy, not a personal auto policy, is the one that matters.
- ☐ **Time of day, weather, and how long the driver said he had been on the road**
Fatigue is proved with the clock. If he tells anyone "I've been driving since Phoenix," write down the words and who heard them.

THE SAME DAY

☐ **Do not talk to the trucking company's team, at the scene or after**

They are there to build the company's defense. Give them our number.

☐ **Call us so a preservation letter goes out this week**

Dashcam, telematics, the electronic log, the driver's file, and the truck's maintenance records. Once the carrier has the letter and destroys them anyway, the jury can be told to assume the evidence would have hurt the carrier.

WHY THE FIRST WEEK DECIDES A TRUCK CASE

Electronic logs, dashcam loops, and telematics overwrite on a schedule. A preservation letter served this week freezes them. Served next month, they may already be gone, and gone evidence is the defense's best witness.

Free case review: (424) 235-7879. No fee unless we recover. Case costs are disclosed in writing before we begin. Se habla español. The web version saves your progress: <https://www.wiseinjuryfirm.com/library/tools/truck-crash-checklist/>

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