TOP 10
Risk Areas of Work Trucks

Do you know where the risk areas are on your service truck?

Brought to you by LINE-X®
PROTECTIVE COATINGS
INTRODUCTION

Operating a truck fleet is inherently risky. But when you and your employees understand the hazards and know how to confront them, you can create a formula for a safer, more efficient fleet with fewer accidents, fines and breakdowns. Here are 10 risk areas and solutions to reduce accidents surrounding work and service trucks.

DID YOU KNOW?

The average on-the-job vehicle crash costs an employer $16,500. A crash with an injury averages $74,000, and the costs of a crash with a fatality can exceed $500,000.

– Occupational Safety and Health Administration

RISKS

1. Neglecting tire and other vehicle maintenance
2. Nonworking or dirty lights
3. Unsecured/improperly secured tools and equipment
4. Exceeding gross vehicle weight ratings/gross combined weight ratings
5. Slips and falls from the vehicle or in the truck body
6. Dirty windshields/defective defogging systems
7. Poor truck/trailer connections
8. Defective braking systems
9. Poorly positioned mirrors
10. Inappropriately placed truck-body access points
Neglecting tire and other vehicle maintenance

Vehicle upkeep is critical to safety. Tires alone have a huge impact. According to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration survey, tire issues ranging from under-inflation to blowouts are an underlying factor in 9 percent of crashes.

SOLUTIONS

Put vehicles and trailers on manufacturer-recommended preventive maintenance schedules. Train employees to properly conduct pre-trip inspections of vehicles and trailers and promptly notify a supervisor of any defects. A telematics system with onboard engine diagnostics can help you keep track of when preventive-maintenance tasks are due, identify problems before they become major and record service details.
It’s always important that headlights and other vehicle/trailer lights are working and clean, and this is especially important during inclement weather, when seeing and being seen are a challenge.

Teach employees to always check headlights, taillights, running lights, directional signals and brake lights during pre-trip inspects, replace any burned-out bulbs and remove mud, road grime, etc. Also check local driving codes regarding the use of hazard lights and train employees accordingly. When they stop on the road shoulder or are moving at less than 10 or 15 mph in a heavy downpour, hazard lights might help other drivers see the vehicle, but state laws pertaining to this practice vary.
make sure employees know how to correctly tie down, secure and/or cover equipment, tools, chemicals, materials and any other cargo. also train them to balance and stabilize loads.
Exceeding gross vehicle weight ratings or gross combined weight ratings

This creates numerous safety hazards and leads to significant fines. In addition to immediate safety concerns, repeated overloading causes excessive wear and tear to multiple truck/trailer components. An axle could break, studs holding tires on could crack, etc., causing accidents.

SOLUTIONS

Ensure employees know how to tabulate the weight of vehicles and their cargo and avoid exceeding gross weight ratings. The definition of overloading applies to numerous aspects of a vehicle’s design. If the load on any individual load-carrying component (axles, springs, tires, etc.) exceeds that component’s rating, the vehicle is overloaded.
RISK

Slips and falls from the vehicle or in the truck body

Slips might sound like minor incidents, but they can result in significant injuries, including broken bones, sprains, back injuries and concussions. Maneuvering in and around a work or service truck presents slip hazards, especially in wet conditions.

SOLUTIONS

Consider adding a spray-on, slip resistant, protective coating such as those offered by LINE-X to your truck beds and other surfaces where employees step. Not only will this reduce the risk of slips and falls, but it will guard your investments against corrosion, abrasion and impacts. When spec'ing your trucks, avoid excessively high step-up heights and provide adequate hand grabs to allow the operator to maintain three-point contact while accessing the body or the cab. Teach workers not to jump on or off vehicles or trailers. Require them to wear boots or shoes with slip-resistant soles and to keep them free of grease, oil and mud.

DID YOU KNOW?

Falls, slips and trips accounted for 17 percent of occupational injuries across industries.


Eliminate work truck risks by calling LINE-X today! (844) 803-4909
www.LINEXUtilityServiceTrucks.com
“Our customers really like the durability of the product, but also the texture of it because in addition to protecting the beds of the trucks, guys working with the trucks, getting in and out of them all the time, won’t slip on it if it gets a little wet.”

— Nick Nichols, marketing and communications manager for Nichols Fleet Equipment in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He says his company uses the LINE-X product exclusively now and will be spraying it on hundreds of trucks annually. Depending on customer specs, they spray the product on the load bed, front of the truck body (as a rock guard because the front of the body sticks out on the sides), on workbench bumpers, any high-traffic areas and the entire undersides of trucks that work in quarries and mines.
Dirty, bug-smeared, pitted or fogged-up windshields reduce visibility, which is key to safe driving.

**SOLUTIONS**

Replace heavily pitted windshields, check washer fluid regularly and make sure defogging systems are functioning properly. Train employees to clean the inside and outside of windshields whenever dirt, oil or smears are present and to take full advantage of windshield defoggers. With some vehicles, you can turn the air conditioner on and off separately from the defroster. If possible, turn on the air conditioner to help dehumidify and defog, even in cold months. If the vehicle has an air recirculation switch, set it to “fresh air” rather than recirculation. Windshield wipers should be replaced at least every six months. Teach drivers to clean or replace them as necessary. Since sunlight and heat damage wiper blades, spring or early summer is a good time to inspect them to see if they can make it through the season.
Teach employees to check the hitch and ball to make sure they are properly matched and secured. Information on correct hitch size is stamped on the trailer tongue. To ensure a trailer is securely hitched, lift the trailer tongue to see if it remains attached. If the trailer and its cargo are too heavy for this, use a tongue jack. Also connect the trailer and tow vehicle with two safety chains.

SOLUTIONS

Serious accidents have resulted when trucks and trailers weren’t properly connected. If the truck hitch ball isn’t the right size for the trailer, going over a few bumps could cause the two to separate.
Defective braking systems

Lack of maintenance and hot temperatures/roadways can cause brakes to fail, and loss of braking ability is almost certain to lead to an accident.

SOLUTIONS

Properly maintain braking systems and replace parts when needed. Train drivers to check brakes often and always do a test stop before getting out on the road. Also teach them to test trailer-braking systems before towing. Check with your state department of transportation to find out when trailer brakes and breakaway systems (which activate trailer brakes if a trailer disconnects from its tow vehicle) must be used. Most states require these things for trailers over certain gross vehicle weights. Trailer brakes and breakaway systems can keep an unhitched trailer under better control and prevent it from causing the tow vehicle to have an accident.
Visibility from a work or service truck can be challenging, and mirrors are essential for seeing around the vehicle when changing lanes or backing, especially when towing a trailer.

**SOLUTIONS**

Teach employees to check mirrors to ensure they have good side and rear visibility before they begin driving. When towing a trailer, a driver should adjust mirrors so that when the truck and trailer are in a straight line, he/she can see the back corner of the trailer.
For trucks that will operate primarily in urban areas, specify access points to the rear or curbside of the vehicle to avoid traffic exposure. For vehicles intended for off-road environments, place the primary access point as close to the driver’s compartment as possible so the driver won’t be tempted to access the bed some other (unsafe) way.

**SOLUTIONS**

For trucks that will operate primarily in urban areas, specify access points to the rear or curbside of the vehicle to avoid traffic exposure. For vehicles intended for off-road environments, place the primary access point as close to the driver’s compartment as possible so the driver won’t be tempted to access the bed some other (unsafe) way.
CONCLUSION

Most service truck accidents can be prevented with well spec’d and well maintained equipment and concentrated effort to train workers for safety.

For more information about LINE-X, visit www.LINEXUtilityServiceTrucks.com or call (844) 803-4909