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Texas Leads U.S. in Fatal Truck Crashes as Safety Enforcement Plummets

Fatal truck crashes in Texas are rising while federal enforcement stalls— leaving unsafe carriers on the road and families paying the price.

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By Waters Kraus Paul & Siegel

Fatal crashes involving large trucks are near record highs, yet federal safety enforcement against dangerous trucking companies has dropped dramatically in 2025. In Texas—the deadliest state for truck crashes—the decline has left motorists more vulnerable than ever.

Real World Consequences for Truck Safety Slowdown

Since January, federal enforcement actions to remove unsafe operators from the road have dropped 60 percent, according to published reports. That includes nearly 70 cases to shut down trucking companies with chronic violations that have been stalled, giving problem carriers a green light to keep rolling.

The safety slowdown has real world consequences for motorists who share the road with large commercial trucks and 18-wheelers. Poor vehicle maintenance and driver training and supervision have played roles in recent multiple-fatality tragedies involving tractor trailers on Texas roads and highways.



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— ATTORNEY JASON MCGILBERRY OF WATERS KRAUS PAUL & SIEGEL.

“Profit-driven trucking operators will cut corners whenever they can,” said Dallas attorney [Jason McGilberry](#) of Waters Kraus Paul & Siegel. “Without enforcement, we frequently find them skipping maintenance, neglecting training, and pushing drivers past their limits. The result is predictable—more tragedies on Texas roads.”

When Truck Safety Lapses, Texas Families Pay the Price

In June 2025, five people—including four members of a family—were killed when a tractor trailer subcontracted to haul U.S. mail barreled through a construction zone on Interstate 20 near Terrell, Texas, and caused a chain-reaction crash. According to police reports, the driver fell asleep at the wheel and never applied the brakes before the collision. Investigators later revealed that truck operator Hope Trans LLC had a history of safety problems, including hours-of-service (HOS) falsification, maintenance neglect, paperwork irregularities, and fraudulent vehicle registration.

In the past year alone, Hope Trans trucks were involved in four injury crashes. Over two years, the company failed more than a third of its vehicle inspections—far above the national average. Its drivers were also cited repeatedly for falsifying or failing to log their hours.

In August 2025, the truck driver who caused the Terrell crash was indicted on nine felony counts, including manslaughter and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. An official with Hope Trans is now facing a felony forgery charge related to falsifying vehicle registration information.

The Terrell tragedy was not an isolated incident. In March 2025, a tractor trailer hauling an Amazon shipment triggered a 17-vehicle pileup in a construction zone near Austin, killing five people, including two children. Two years earlier, in February 2023, an undertrained driver hauling an unauthorized trailer plowed into a chain-reaction crash on an icy stretch of Interstate-35 in Fort Worth, contributing to multiple deaths.

Truck Traffic in Texas Keeps Rising

The so-called “Texas Miracle” economy has supercharged the state’s business climate and caused a steady increase in people relocating to Texas. As a result, more trucks are on Texas roads and highways than ever before.

In the Permian Basin oil patch in far West Texas, narrow rural highways are not designed to handle the large volume of heavy trucks required in modern oil production. In growing urban population centers, tractor trailers navigate clogged roads and construction areas. The Texas Department of Transportation expects commercial trucking traffic to increase by 22 percent by 2030.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, more than 39,000 commercial motor vehicle crashes occurred in 2024, including 546 fatal incidents and more than 1,600 suspected serious injuries. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration figures also show that Texas recorded 772 fatal large truck crashes in 2023, the highest of any state in the nation. These statistics underscore the scope of the problem and demonstrate why specialized legal advocacy in trucking cases has become critical.

When Government Oversight Fails, Litigation Becomes the Backstop

With regulators stepping back, civil litigation has become a key tool left to hold negligent trucking companies accountable. State law in Texas allows juries to return monetary damages for medical expenses, pain and suffering when negligent trucking companies cause crashes. Importantly, state law also allows juries to return additional monetary damages meant to punish companies for their negligent actions.

“Juries understand the stakes,” McGilberry said. “When they deliver verdicts against unsafe trucking companies, it’s often the only thing that forces change.”

Waters Kraus Paul & Siegel is a national plaintiffs’ law firm handling serious injury, toxic exposure, product liability, sexual abuse, qui tam cases and more.

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