



March 02, 2023

The Honorable Gary Peters, Chair
The Honorable Rand Paul, Ranking Member
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Peters and Ranking Member Paul:

Investigative reporting by the Wall Street Journal reveals that the United States Post Office (USPS) is running freight operations in clear violation of common-sense safety standards and is needlessly killing untold numbers of Americans. The article, "[Trucks Hauling U.S. Mail Frequently Violate Safety Rules](#)," estimates that 79 people have lost lives at the hands of USPS postal contractors.¹ However, the true number is unknown as the article reveals that **the USPS does not require contractors to report crashes that result in death or injury**. The Truck Safety Coalition respectfully requests the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee conduct a hearing to investigate this critical issue and identify solutions to drastically improve USPS freight safety practices.

USPS's freight contracting policy and its contract monitoring and enforcement practices are wholly inadequate and demonstrate a complete and utter disregard for public safety. It is true that USPS is exempt from certain federal motor carrier safety requirements by statute. However, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has long affirmed that **this safety exemption does NOT apply to its contracted carriers**.²

Despite being one of the largest purchasers of commercial freight, WSJ reporting estimates only 18 contract officers oversee USPS' entire network of over 1,700 contractors.^{3,4} The article cites several disturbing unsafe practices: setting delivery schedules without regard for federal Hours of Service requirements and concern for driver fatigue, contracting with carriers rated "Conditional" by FMCSA, and selecting carriers with extensive records of safety violations.

USPS' decision to award freight contracts to conditionally rated carriers is highly problematic. According to FMCSA, a "Conditional" rating means a trucking company **does not have**

¹ Weaver, C. (2023, March 1). Trucks hauling U.S. mail frequently violate safety rules. crashes killed 79 people since 2020. Trucks Hauling U.S. Mail Frequently Violate Safety Rules. Crashes Killed 79 People Since 2020.

² 70 FR 69625 (Nov. 16, 2005)

³ Weaver, C. (2023, March 1). Trucks hauling U.S. mail frequently violate safety rules. crashes killed 79 people since 2020. Trucks Hauling U.S. Mail Frequently Violate Safety Rules. Crashes Killed 79 People Since 2020.k

⁴ United States Postal Service, (March 2022), OIG: The Truck Driver Shortage: Implications for the Postal Service. Report No. RISC-WP-22-002

adequate safety fitness standards necessary to prevent known risks to safety.⁵ Overall, reporting suggests that the FMCSA flagged over 450 USPS contractors for high violation rates in just two years' time.⁶

America is in the midst of a truck crash crisis and the USPS is exacerbating the problem. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) projects truck crash fatalities to increase another 10% in 2022, which would result in over 6,000 innocent highway users being killed. TSC urges the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to treat this issue with the utmost seriousness and hold an oversight hearing in the next weeks.⁷

Sincerely,

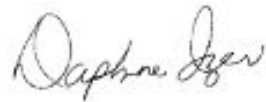


Tami Friedrich Trakh
President
Truck Safety Coalition

Tami's sister, Kris, brother-in-law, Alan, and two of their children, Brandie and Anthony, were killed in 1989 when a tanker truck overturned in front of them and exploded.



Joan Claybrook
Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways (CRASH) Board Chair
Former NHTSA Administrator



Daphne & Steve Izer
Co-Chair
Parents Against Tired Truckers

Daphne and Steve's son, Jeff, and three of his friends were killed in 1993 when a semi-truck driver fell asleep at the wheel and ran over their parked car.



Russell Swift
Co-Chair
Parents Against Tired Truckers

⁵ 49 C.F.R. § 385, Appendix B

⁶ Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories Through June 2022, NHTSA, December 2022, DOT HS 813 405 Retrieved from <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813405>

⁷ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats; Early Estimates of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate by Sub-Categories in 2021, NHTSA, May 2022, DOT HS 813 298

Russ' son, Jasen, was killed instantly, as was a fellow Marine, while they drove in the dark to work in 1993, by a seventeen-year-old truck driver on an invalid learner's permit whose truck was stuck across two lanes after trying a U-turn, causing the car to drive into and under the side of the trailer, causing a fatal underride crash.



Zach Cahalan
Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition (TSC)

cc: Senator Richard Blumenthal
Senator Thomas Carper
Senator Margaret Hassan
Senator Kyrsten Sinema
Senator Jon Ossoff
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Jacky Rosen
Senator Josh Hawley
Senator Ron Johnson
Senator James Lankford
Senator Roger Marshall
Senator Mitt Romney
Senator Rick Scott

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation OIG Inspector General Eric Soskin
United States Postal Service OIG Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb Hull



March 02, 2023

The Honorable James Comer, Chair
The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Comer and Ranking Member Raskin:

Investigative reporting by the Wall Street Journal reveals that the United States Post Office (USPS) is running freight operations in clear violation of common-sense safety standards and is needlessly killing untold numbers of Americans. The article, "[Trucks Hauling U.S. Mail Frequently Violate Safety Rules](#)," estimates that 79 people have lost lives at the hands of USPS postal contractors.¹ In response to Committee Member Congressman Gerald Connolly's USPS inquiries, we know that the true number is unknown because **the USPS disclosed that it does not require contractors to report crashes that result in death or injury**. The Truck Safety Coalition respectfully requests the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability conduct a hearing to investigate this critical issue and identify solutions to drastically improve USPS freight safety practices.

USPS's freight contracting policy and its contract monitoring and enforcement practices are wholly inadequate and demonstrate a complete and utter disregard for public safety. It is true that USPS is exempt from certain federal motor carrier safety requirements by statute. However, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has long affirmed that **this safety exemption does NOT apply to its contracted carriers**.²

Despite being one of the largest purchasers of commercial freight, WSJ reporting estimates only 18 contract officers oversee USPS' entire network of over 1,700 contractors.^{3,4} The article cites several disturbing unsafe practices: setting delivery schedules without regard for federal Hours of Service requirements and concern for driver fatigue, contracting with carriers rated "Conditional" by FMCSA, and selecting carriers with extensive records of safety violations.

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⁴ United States Postal Service, (March 2022), OIG: The Truck Driver Shortage: Implications for the Postal Service. Report No. RISC-WP-22-002

USPS' decision to award freight contracts to conditionally rated carriers is highly problematic. According to FMCSA, a "Conditional" rating means a trucking company **does not have adequate safety fitness standards necessary** to prevent known risks to safety.⁵ Overall, reporting suggests that the FMCSA flagged over 450 USPS contractors for high violation rates in just two years' time.⁶

America is in the midst of a truck crash crisis and the USPS is exacerbating the problem. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) projects truck crash fatalities to increase another 10% in 2022, which would result in over 6,000 innocent highway users being killed. TSC urges the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability to treat this issue with the utmost seriousness and hold an oversight hearing in the next weeks.⁷

Sincerely,



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Executive Director, Truck Safety Coalition (TSC)

cc: House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Members

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation OIG Inspector General Eric Soskin
United States Postal Service OIG Inspector General Tammy Whitcomb Hull