

Delaware General Health District
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NEWS RELEASE

TASK FORCE FORMED TO EXAMINE TRUCK-RELATED CRASH DEATHS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE, Oh., Nov. 16, 2011 – In response to multiple highway deaths in crashes involving heavy trucks, the Delaware County Safe Communities Coalition has formed a Commercial Vehicle Crash Task Force.

The Task Force will include Safe Communities Coalition members from the Ohio Highway Patrol, the Delaware County Sheriff's Office, the Delaware County Engineer's Office, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Delaware General Health District. They will partner with representatives of local firms involved with trucking.

The Task Force is working to identify causes and factors behind the local fatalities and recommend safety strategies to prevent more such tragedies. It is meeting monthly.

Four of the 13 highway deaths in Delaware County this year have involved commercial trucks weighing more than 26,000 pounds:

- On May 16, a truck went left of center on the U.S. 42S bridge over the Scioto River, crashing into an oncoming Saturn SUV and killing the SUV driver.
- On June 30, the driver of a Hyundai SUV went left of center on State Route 203, crashing head-on into a cement truck. The SUV driver died.
- On August 22, an 86-year-old man walked into the path of a commercial trash truck on North Sandusky Street in Delaware and was struck and killed.

- On Nov. 4, a 50-year-old cement truck driver died when his rig went off the side of State Route 37 at Route 605, struck a pole, and overturned.

Nationwide in 2008, just one out of nine traffic fatalities resulted from collisions involving large trucks. Delaware County's rate this year is significantly higher than that.

Lt. Kevin Knapp, Commander of the Delaware Post of the Ohio Highway Patrol, said, "The goal of this task force is obviously to reduce and or eliminate commercial involved fatal crashes within Delaware County. Fifty percent of the fatal crashes involving commercial vehicles this year in Delaware County have not been the fault of the truck drivers. We will continue to work to bring awareness to both sides of this problem in a concentrated effort to keep people alive in this County."

The four truck-related fatalities represent the year-to-date difference from 2010 in Delaware County, when there had been only nine highway fatalities by this time of year.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, each fatality has a comprehensive cost of \$3,366,388 associated with it. Expressed that way, Delaware County's highway death toll for 2011 stands at more than \$43.7 million.

The Delaware County Safe Communities Program, a Delaware General Health District program, was developed by the Office of Criminal Justice Services of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. For safe driving tips, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at <http://nhtsa.gov>.