



## **TRAINING...SAFETY'S CRITICAL COMPONENT**

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*In any situation knowing what to do and when to do it is important to all of us in performing our daily responsibilities. When those responsibilities include decisions that involve the safety and protection of life and prevention of fatalities the decisions we make become critical. The training we receive dictates our response.*

*Motor Carrier Enforcement and Motor Carrier Fleet personnel make critical choices daily that involve others who potentially would be victims of their human error or ignorance. An Enforcement Officer strives to prevent the loss of human life in various ways from citing potential safety issues to mitigating catastrophic events. Although Fleet Safety/Compliance Managers' responsibilities are not as obvious, their safety failures or practices could have the same catastrophic results. Both Law Enforcement Managers and Safety/Compliance Managers share the same safety related goals with very different approaches. There is a stark contrast in the training available for them to have success in their programs. Having been on both sides of this equation, I can identify with the frustrations of Federal, State and Local Enforcement as well as Private and for-hire Motor Carriers as they attempt to accomplish the shared goal of reducing fatal crashes. Training opportunities for MCSAP inspectors is readily available and excellent. For industry....not so much!*

*Having spent over 30 years as a State Trooper/Supervisor in Motor Carrier Enforcement I understand the importance of an accurate roadside inspection or detailed crash investigation. Intense initial training occurs for Federal, State and Local Enforcement thru the NASI and HazMat courses from certified Instructors/ Associate Staff members from the National Training Center (NTC). The training received from NTC is not only the best training available but the training is reinforced with in the field follow-up mentoring from experienced roadside inspectors before a new inspector is certified in any of the inspection levels. The successful completion of these courses assures Enforcement Managers that they will have a competently trained unit of inspectors. The intent of those roadside inspections, both HazMat and non-HazMat is to gather information on carriers, identify violations and remove unsafe drivers/vehicles from our public roadways. We all recognize CVSA as an important catalyst in implementation and oversight that comprehensive training program.*

*The Motor Carrier Industry has fewer opportunities for similar intensive training. There are a limited number of venues that offer safety and hazardous materials training, and even fewer include hands on training. Many of those courses are packaged and presented thru DVD and manuals. However, I have met some safety/compliance managers that I would put up against any of the best NTC trained people, but they are the exception. Many of these safety professionals are self-taught and would welcome the opportunity to receive the same intense dedicated training that enforcement has developed. They are the audience the enforcement training efforts are ignoring. Safety compliance training should not be directed to only one side of the safety equation. Wouldn't it be better to demonstrate brake adjustment problems, load securement techniques, lighting issues, hazmat securement and other safety related topics to motor carriers by highly trained and*

*respected enforcement instructors? Shouldn't quality industry instructors explain potential failures in braking systems, suspensions, securement devices, or cargo tank limitations? How about training in HOS on board recorders, shipping techniques, or new non-conventional truck configurations. Everyone should be working from the same standards as required by the regulations. Is there a better way to achieve our safety goals, to get the right message out...to get all working together?*

*COHMED has already demonstrated a training model that works. Yearly at the annual COHMED conference both Industry and Enforcement personnel conduct classes and seminars in many areas of interest to both. This training began with the resources and expertise of industry teaching enforcement. Over the years that has now morphed into a mixture of training on important topics from both sides.*

*The measure of success for enforcement and industry in their efforts is the reduction in fatal accidents. The common denominator for both to achieve that success is the partnership developed over the years within the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA). This unique relationship of enforcement and industry is a tremendous asset in accomplishing the mutual goal of safer roadways. Maybe it's time for CVSA to build on those relationships and the formula that COHMED has found and fostered.*

*Associate members, sponsors and industry participation increases every year. This makes CVSA a prime venue for mutually important training opportunities. For the most part the spring and fall gatherings handle problematic issues and procedures for correction or proposed legislation and its future impact. CVSA should consider adding training during those spring and fall sessions or scheduling more intense seminars throughout the year. Collaboration in training to reduce cost and increase effectiveness seems like a common sense move.*

*We all recognize that the industry is drastically changing as innovations in transportation vehicles, computers, packages and electronic communications evolve. The pay phone is a thing of the past as is home delivery and the typewriter. The cell phone and tablet may also be outdated within ten years. Robotic delivery vehicles and electronic readers are already being used in some applications and that is expected to significantly increase. Is it possible for regulations to keep up with those innovations and can enforcement adapt to the rapid change approaching? Will CVSA be the venue that brings all of these cutting edge innovations into a practical training environment? The ball is in your court!*

*To view the complete magazine publication, [Click Here](#)*