

Alberta Transportation’s Response to the Public Fatality Inquiry

RECOMMENDATION	MINISTRY RESPONSE	STEPS BEING TAKEN
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Alberta Transportation Services (ATS) should consider requiring Carriers to provide safety training and practices for drivers. For example, safety education and risk prevention checklists, i.e. ensuring passengers do not pass in front of a bus at any time. Drivers not to disembark with keys in the ignition. Prevent driver distraction.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When this incident occurred in 2016, there was no standardized nor mandatory training programs for new Class 1 and Class 2 commercial drivers in Alberta. • Since the incident occurred, the government has introduced significant measures to improve commercial driver training and safety that address this recommendation. • The Government of Alberta implemented Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) for all new Class 1 and Class 2 drivers, as of March 1, 2019. • Under MELT, all new Class 1 and Class 2 drivers must complete and pass an enhanced knowledge test, and an enhanced road test to obtain their commercial driver’s licence. • MELT seeks to ensure that all new Class 1 and Class 2 drivers have the same entry-level knowledge and practical skills required to operate large, complex commercial vehicles safely on roads. • MELT is provided by licensed driver training schools, not carriers, as recommended. Licensed driver training schools use licensed driving instructors to deliver Class 2 MELT, which has a mandatory, standardized driver-training curriculum with a combined total of 50 hours of in-class and practical training. • The curriculum includes modules dedicated to safe passenger management practices and professional driving habits (e.g. safe unloading/loading of passengers, defensive driving, proper parking and removal of keys from the ignition, etc.). This program represents a stark contrast from the varied, unregulated training that existed previously, and is almost double the number of hours of most training programs that would have been available in 2016. 	<p>Recommendation complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On March 1, 2019, the government of Alberta implemented the MELT Program, which improves safety for everyone on the road by ensuring Class 1 (tractor-trailer) and Class 2 (bus) drivers receive adequate training for a Class 1 or Class 2 licence, including passenger management skills for those carriers.

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<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>ATS could consider more proactive oversight, such as carriers providing proof of driver safety training, driver supervision, and reporting methods, systems and programs, prior to a Safety Fitness licence being issued. Real risk would be reduced by requiring carriers to provide information, in advance, rather than retrospectively, post-audit or investigation, or triggered by incidents.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Transportation has implemented the requirements of this recommendation through the launch of the Pre-Entry Program on March 1, 2019. • Under the Pre-Entry Program, new and existing carriers must meet the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new carriers must complete a free online Safety Fitness Certificate (SFC) Compliance Course; - new carriers must pass a knowledge test based on the course's content; - new carriers must complete a new carrier compliance review within the first 12 months of operation; and, - all carriers must renew their existing SFC every three years, at which point Alberta Transportation will conduct an administrative review of their overall compliance. • Non-compliance carriers are provided with time to address deficiencies, but may also face administrative penalties up to \$10,000 if they do not do so within stipulated timelines. 	<p>Recommendation complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pre-Entry Program, effective as of March 1, 2019, addresses these concerns by ensuring that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - carriers prove systems and safety knowledge before operating; - drivers have the skills and competencies to operate commercial vehicles; and, - that the department has the tools and processes in place to review carrier performance to ensure they are operating safely. • The department will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the pre-entry program and make adjustments where necessary and feasible.

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<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>An efficacy analysis should be conducted to consider expanding proactive safety education and training programs for Class 4 licences and possibly to existing carriers who were not subject to the mini-audit program.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Class 4 licence allows drivers to operate ambulances, taxis, vehicles being used for hire (e.g. Uber), and buses with a seating capacity of less than 24 passengers. • This licence becomes a minimum requirement when individuals employed to transport people regularly, are being paid by their employer or others for transporting passengers. • Currently, to obtain a Class 4 licence the driver must hold a Class 5, at minimum, and pass the Class 4 knowledge test, Class 4 road test, and medical examinations. These testing requirements are in place to ensure drivers know how to safely transport passengers and do not have any medical conditions that would affect their driving. • Class 1, 2 and 4 drivers operating school buses must also obtain the “S” Endorsement by successfully completing the School Bus Driver Improvement Program. This program includes 16 hours of training on subjects such as safe passenger management, defensive driving, handling emergencies, and other subjects, as well as a pre-trip inspection and on-road assessment. • All classes of drivers operating ambulances and oil and gas emergency response units must also successfully complete a professional driver improvement course every two years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta Transportation is exploring streamlining the process for obtaining a Class 4 licence. • As part of the Class 4 licensing review, content in the <i>Commercial Driver's Guide to Operation, Safety and Licensing: Trucks, Buses, Emergency Responders and Taxis</i> will also be assessed to ensure there is accurate and adequate information on passenger management and safety. • The recommendation to consider expanding proactive safety education for a Class 4 licence will be considered as part of this review.

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<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Evidence supported that news media triggered ATS's post-accident investigation of the carrier. The current alert system is not adequate to ensure a timely suspension, pending investigation and audit, to avoid continuation of real and present danger. For example, there could be an onus on carriers to report accidents to ATS, upon them occurring.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continually monitor Alberta-based carriers, Alberta Transportation reviews carrier safety performance data related to on-highway events, such as collisions, convictions, and Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspections. Safety event data is collected and managed on a carrier's profile to calculate a Risk Factor score, which is used to identify carriers that present an unacceptable risk to the public. In Alberta, collisions must be reported to the local police agency, who in turn, notifies the Provincial Transportation Management Centre (TMC). Basic information of an incident is usually made available within an hour. Since May 2017, the department has refined systems and tools to manage incident tracking and notification processes. Two distinct incident notification processes for transportation related incidents through the TMC have been established, which enable timely reviews and actions to be taken to incidents when they occur. <p><u>High Profile Incident (HPI)</u> - an on-road incident of grave concern, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An incident involving a passenger-carrying commercial vehicle (e.g. school bus or motor coach); A collision that has resulted in a highway closure with fatalities; or A train derailment, incident or collision affecting public safety. <p><u>Significant Highway Incident (SHI)</u> - any incident that may significantly impact travel that is reported to and acted upon by the TMC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These incidents are investigated by subject matter experts who determine appropriate response. In many cases interventions occur after the police investigation is complete, however the Registrar has the authority to take swift intervention actions with a driver or carrier as a result of an incident, including (but not limited to): downgrading a safety fitness rating, suspension or cancellation of a carrier's Safety Fitness Certificate, issuance of penalties or conditions, pending an investigation. The Registrar currently utilizes this authority when warranted. 	<p>Recommendation complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alberta Transportation has invested in IT system modernization and upgrades to enhance business and client online services, information management and reporting, application and audit tools, and to facilitate process efficiencies in carrier reviews. These enhancements included updates that collectively support the tracking and responsiveness of highway incidents. Alberta Transportation will continue to evaluate these notification systems on an ongoing basis and make enhancements when necessary and feasible.

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<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Reference was made to British Columbia having additional prerequisites for the issuance of Safety Fitness Certificates. ATS should take steps to consider whether additional requisites have resulted in reducing risk of infractions, accidents, and fatalities, ensuring best-practices are implemented in Alberta.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When this incident occurred in 2016, there were little mandatory requirements for new commercial carriers in Alberta. • Since the incident occurred, the government has introduced the Pre-Entry Program implemented by Alberta Transportation on March 2019 detailed under recommendation 2, which has similar requirements to the British Columbia program. 	<p>Recommendation complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pre-Entry Program, effective as of March 1, 2019, addresses the recommendation by requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new carriers complete a Safety Fitness Certificate (SFC) Compliance Course; - new carriers pass a knowledge test - new carriers complete a new carrier compliance review within the first 12 months of operation; and - All carriers must renew their existing SFC every three years. • The department will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the pre-entry program and make adjustments where necessary and feasible.
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Evidence supported that changes to the lookout area could have prevented the fatality. For example: a) a square curb separating the road from the sidewalk; b) a barrier separating the road and pedestrian areas and river; and c) parking requirements to ensure vehicles parked parallel, as opposed to perpendicular, to a steep slope. A study should be conducted in the Rocky Mountain area to identify high-traffic, high risk areas and ensure curbs, barriers and parking zones are adapted to the terrain.</p>	<p>Alberta Transportation Accepts in Principle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the lookout area in question is within the boundaries of Banff National Park, the remedy as recommended would fall under the federal government's jurisdiction so ATS is unable to accept as written. • ATS has shared this recommendation with Parks Canada, the Federal Ministry responsible for national parks, and national historic sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the recommendation was narrowly focused on an area outside of provincial jurisdiction, ATS will review and adopt these recommendations, where appropriate, for infrastructure assets under its jurisdictional scope, i.e. provincial highways and parks.