

## **Heavy Vehicle Enforcement in South Australia**

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South Australia Police and the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) maintain a co-operative partnership to maximise compliance and enforcement within the road freight heavy transport sector.

To enhance communication with other road safety enforcement stakeholders involved with the heavy road transport sector SAPOL initiated and chairs an Enforcement Liaison Group. Monthly meetings are scheduled to facilitate discussion about compliance and operational issues relevant to the sector. The group comprises representatives from DTEI Safety Compliance Officers, Transport Safety Inspectors and Worksafe SA Inspectors.

Within the Traffic Operations Unit a Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group was formed on 1 November 2006 as a consequence of a traffic resource review supporting the SAPOL Road Safety Strategy 2006-2010. The current structure of this group comprises a Sergeant and eight personnel attached to Operations Section, Traffic Support Branch.

The group enhances SAPOL capacity to provide an enforcement and investigation function focussed upon the road freight heavy transport sector. The development of a heavy vehicle enforcement support role has occurred over a number of years. Heavy vehicle enforcement was primarily conducted by Highway Patrols. They continue their important contribution in this regard, however competing operational demands and recognition of a need for a core group that can provide consistency and investigative support has resulted in the formation of the Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group.

Fatal road crashes involving heavy vehicles result in Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group personnel providing support to investigations conducted by members of the Major Crash Investigation Unit. Heavy vehicles are involved in about 15% of fatal road crashes. What is certain is that the occupants of light vehicles unfortunate enough to be involved in collision with a large vehicle are invariably those who are injured or killed as a result. The greater percentage of road crashes between light and heavy vehicles are attributable to fault of the driver of light vehicles. Those crashes where heavy vehicle drivers are at fault are commonly rear end or vehicle left road or hit fixed object crashes (often where fatigue is assessed to be a contributing factor).

The SAPOL Road Safety Strategy 2006-2010 requires all police to take action at every opportunity to reinforce the message that there will be less tolerance of poor driving. Heavy vehicle enforcement can involve a level of technical detail and intricacy that demands specific knowledge and skills. The road freight heavy transport sector is regulated by a variety of detailed legislative provisions in a rapidly changing and demanding environment. The Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group is continually building capacity in response to the spectrum of operational tasks, investigations and enquiries associated with heavy vehicle enforcement.

Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group members maintain a collaborative relationship with the Transport Safety Compliance Section of the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI). Inspectors from this area share responsibility for on road enforcement of heavy vehicles. The DTEI focus is upon road network asset protection and safety (including mass, dimensions, loading, route access compliance and vehicle condition). DTEI Investigators also audit compliance to chain of responsibility provisions and adherence to National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Schemes. Regular consultation between police and DTEI ensures enhanced service delivery to the road transport sector focussing on road safety outcomes.

Legislative changes impacting the road transport sector are occurring at a considerable pace, driven by national transport reform objectives aiming to deliver consistent road laws wherever possible (particularly involving heavy vehicles and the freight task). The complexity of such provisions is exemplified by the introduction of a chain of responsibility for persons in the transport sector whose actions or inactions can negatively impact road safety. A duty of care and legal accountability is imposed on those who exert some control and direct influence over the driver, vehicle loading or the journey.

Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group members recognise the value in allocating time to talk and listen to truck drivers and others within the sector, to acquire information contributing to SAPOL intelligence holdings. Intelligence emanating from SAPOL, specifically relating to heavy vehicle enforcement is distributed to police nationally. The regular bulletin provides enforcement practitioners timely information about recidivist drivers

and operators who routinely breach road safety requirements. All operational police are encouraged to contribute to this knowledge by submission of Ancillary Reports. This Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Bulletin initiative is now emulated by other police and transport agencies around Australia.

Close liaison with the Traffic Intelligence Section results in development of 'target' packages. These identify specific individuals, companies or groups that have a significant recorded incidence of traffic related road safety breaches. Upon approval by the Traffic Coordination Group, Traffic Support Branch a target is approved for attention by the Heavy Vehicle Enforcement Group. Targeting can include on road enforcement, issue of Improvement Notices (indicating outcomes required), auditing of systems and procedures and investigations relating to compliance.

The road freight task is predicted to double by 2020. This is intrinsically linked to national and international economic performance, moving cargo from point of origin to consumers, consignees, markets and seaports. For freight delivered by road this means either more vehicles on the road (and resultant increased crash risk exposure) or more productivity by use of efficient vehicle solutions to achieve it. A challenge for SAPOL is to continue to provide appropriate resources to meet the road safety challenges imposed by the freight task predicted growth.

The presentation supporting this extended abstract will contain case studies and outcomes.