

On-road and driver fatalities at Toll Group: what the data reveals about risk and opportunity in our pursuit of zero

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Abstract

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Background

Toll Group is the Asia-Pacific region's largest provider of transport and logistics services, operating across 1,200 locations in more than 50 countries. In 2017 Toll undertook an analysis of all 'on-road and driver fatalities' that occurred in its operations between 1 July 2007 and 31 December 2016.

This paper represents the first in-depth public articulation of Toll's research. Our results suggest that key opportunities to influence the road toll are being missed by industry, community and government.

Method

Toll defined 'on-road and driver fatality' as all situations where:

- a Toll employee, contractor or casual was killed on a road or road related area
- a Toll employee, contractor or casual was involved in (but not necessarily responsible for) an on-road incident that resulted in a fatality
- a Toll driver (employee, contractor or casual) died at a Toll premises or in a Toll vehicle, regardless of the cause

Incidents meeting the definition were extracted from Toll's Incident Management System (IMS). Internal reports, insurance data, investigation material and coroners and police reports were consulted to ascertain trends, patterns and common characteristics in the data.

Results

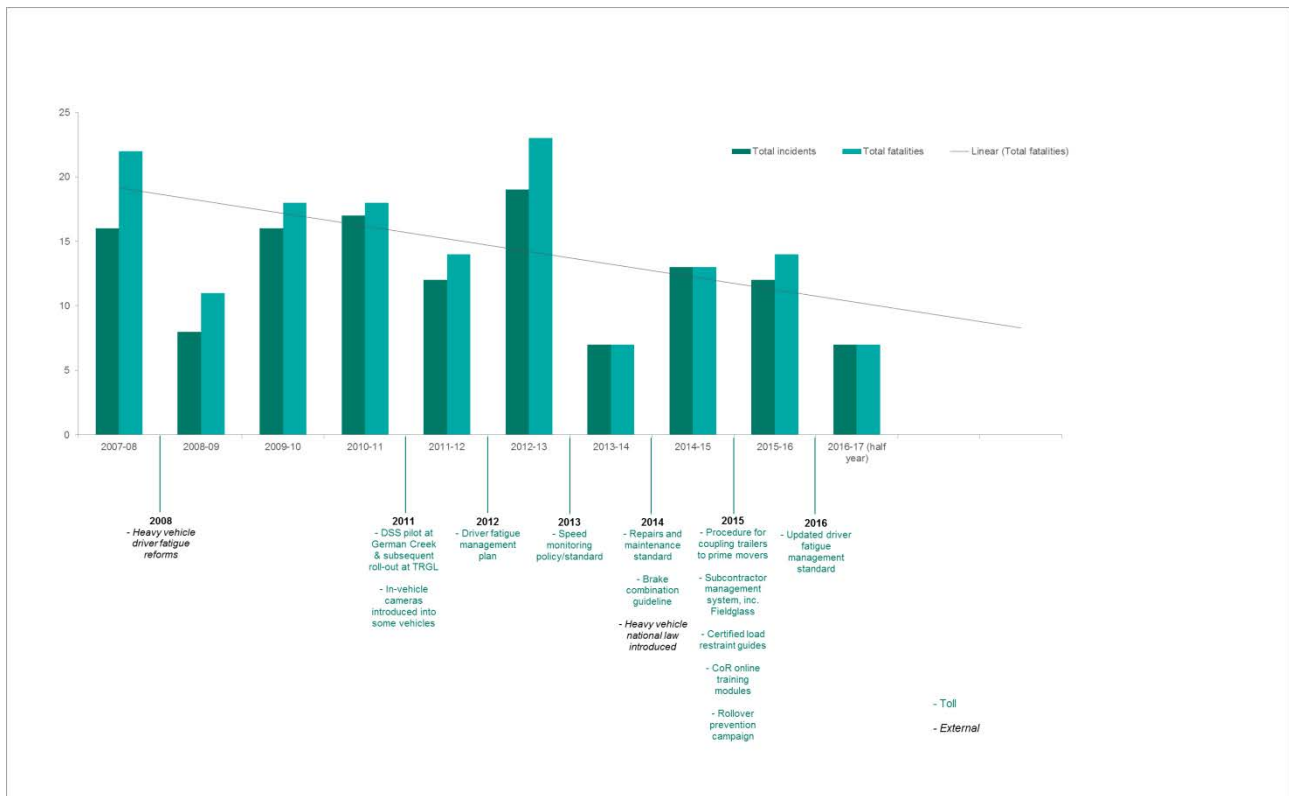
During the timeframe under review there were 147 fatalities arising from 127 incidents.

Toll's trendline broadly mirrors the downwards movement of the national road toll.

The improvement is particularly apparent for Toll employees. In 2010/11, an employee died for every 29 million kilometers travelled. In 2015/16 that number was nearly 116 million kilometers: an improvement by a factor of more than 4.

As indicated in the chart on the following page, there are variations year-on-year but the overall trend is downwards.

Figure 1. Toll Group Fatalities and Policy Interventions



Conclusions

The key conclusions arising from the investigation and analysis are:

- Industry can impact the road toll through policy and technology interventions designed to prevent speed and fatigue.
- Fatalities appear more likely to involve contractor and casual drivers (69%) than employee drivers (29%). Industry needs to understand why subcontractor drivers constitute a higher risk and manage it.
- In most instances of fatality liability is attributed to parties other than Toll. This suggests a need for third party road users to be more educated in how to share the road with heavy vehicles. Despite this, national and state road safety strategies are almost entirely silent on light and heavy vehicle interaction.
- Non-work related fatalities occurred in 9% of incidents and are overwhelmingly the result of a heart attack experienced on a Toll premises or in a Toll vehicle. This suggests a need to address the cardiovascular health of drivers.
- Fourteen percent of the fatality incidents are confirmed suicides by truck. This is almost certainly a considerable underestimate and an issue that Toll cannot resolve unilaterally. It requires community and government involvement.