

Vance Wagner - Comments

I drove one of the first year trucks with Stability Control. You approved them, based on their design for tankers to assist in preventing a higher percentage of rollovers in curves. The ones we received were used for pulling doubles and vans. Turning a set of doubles on ice required you make the turn at about 2 miles per hour because the computer would take over and brake the tractor, leaving the trailers and dolly to jackknife. If you were not going that slow, they would collide with each other. About 6 years ago, I was pulling a van with one, as they were not labelled, you found out after you were in trouble. I was half way through my trip, just before getting onto the WV turnpike, the speed dropped 5 mph, so I lightly applied the brakes. A random brake failure on one of my rear axles caused the wheel to briefly lock up, triggering the computer override braking, while going downhill in the rain. In spite of reacting as quickly as possible, shoving in the clutch and counter steering, the jackknife the computer caused by applying all tractor brakes itself and not the trailer brakes, put me into a full blind side jackknife. After steering into the trailer, I managed to avoid going through a guardrail and into a 200 yard deep ravine. I took out about 30 yards of guardrail, then once I was back off it, I had a 1/4 mile to decide whether to risk applying the brake pedal which would also brake trailer, risking it causing the trailer to slide into traffic. I picked up speed during that 1/4 mile and hit the wall being crushed by a 28 ton van at about 70mph. AUTOMATED SYSTEMS DO NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EVERY FACTOR and many people will die or be disabled for life like me. It is NOT an acceptable risk to treat human lives as collateral damage.