

Anonymous Anonymous - Comments

Docket Number FMCSA-2018-0037 - I am now completely disabled, which in part was due to the original and most basic computer system installed in 2007 Volvo tandem daycabs. I had an unofficial reputation as being the driver to send out first, during heavy snow and ice conditions, especially glare ice, because my reaction times were so fast that I could immediately respond to even taking a set of doubles with a non fixed dolly, over a bridge containing glare ice, and pre-setting the operating conditions, for immediately reacting to the entire combination hitting glare ice and maneuvering over it safely. The particular model was so unsafe, if you were on icy roads facing downhill, you had to come to a complete stop, then idle into a 90 degree left turn onto an ice cover ramp, because the "off set" of the tractor in relation to the rest of the combination, would immediately push you into an accordion style jackknife at an idle or with the clutch depressed (safer method). One summer trip, after a complete pre-trip Inspection, which revealed no defects, Half way through a 475 mile run, I was heading downhill on an Interstate in WV, in the rain. With the tractor heading perfectly straight, responding to a reduction in posted speed, I lightly applied the brake to slow 5 mph. For an unknown mechanical reason, one of the left rear axle tires immediately locked, and the computer applied all the tractor brakes. Without delay, I took my foot off the brake, as I sensed the immediate slide sideways, due to the 28 ton load pushing the tractor sideways with all its tractor brakes applied. Within 3 degrees of a jackknife, I pushed in the clutch and appropriately counter steered to correct. Even at 3 degrees offset, the computer responded to sideways wheel slide, caused by the speed, size, water and load weight etc.. Because the computer kept applying the tractor brakes, it continued, with 28 tons pushing to go into a full jackknife, heading toward the guardrail before a ravine. Knowing it was unrecoverable, I immediately turned into a full wheel left, allowing the weight the 28 ton trailer to act as a pivot and force the front of the tractor into the trailer, minimizing the tractors sideways exposure and instead of going through the guardrail, into a 250 yard deep ravine, I managed to straighten its direction forward enough to only destroy 30 yards of guardrail, before bouncing off due the multiple weights and forces in play. As I came off the guardrail, I had to asses, with the forward speed still somewhat consistent with the posted limit, due to skinning friction, whether it was going to be possible to apply the brakes, so instead of the computer just applying tractor breaks, it would engage the trailer brakes also, with out the still slightly sideways motion causing the tractor to hit the side wall of the bridge and the trailer to slide out in baseball bat like fashion and crush/force nearby vehicles into and over the other side of the bridge. Determining my death was the logical decision vs the deaths of several people, I did not hit the brakes, and continued downhill gaining speed from the forward pressure being much greater than the dragging friction, knowing about a 1/4 mile down the road was a curve with a concrete wall to slam into. This provided the nearby vehicles time to take evasive action and saved many lives. Unfortunately, though I should have died being crushed into the wall at 70 mph, instead I lived, and am now, due to compounded injuries, fully disabled, spending thousands a year on treatment, needing daily care, without the ability to walk or use my arms with any kind of proficiency. My entire life and that of my family has imploded and the only thing I have to feel good about the destruction of my body and complete loss of my family soon, is the ten or so lives I saved, because of a basic computer system YOU APPROVED. If you actually think more electro-mecheanical automation is going to create safe trucks on the highway or save more lives on the highway, you, mostly women, will be patting yourselves on the back for another really stupid decision that cost billions in damage and kills many more people on a percentage basis. The fact you continuously vote from a position of not having a clue what the effect will be on human life, only creating happy car drivers, oblivious to reality, only reinforces that after you hear this story, from the most basic stupid idea you approved, that you will surely green light self controlled monsters of death onto the highways of the United States to kill, maim and crush innocent people..