



Public Service Commission Chairman Lane's Column



July 6, 2020

Keeping West Virginia's Roads Safe

Now that West Virginia is reopening, people are taking to the roads for summer activities, and the Public Service Commission's Transportation Enforcement Officers are patrolling the highways to ensure your safety. They are always on the lookout for commercial motor vehicles that pose a hazard to other drivers. In addition to their routine duties, our officers often cooperate with other law enforcement agencies to mount specialized patrols. One example of this is Operation Safe Driver Week, a nationwide program that takes place this year from July 12-18.

The event is organized by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and this year features a special enforcement focus on speeding. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown CVSA monitored speeds on interstates, state highways and expressways in the country's five largest metropolitan areas. Study results showed average speeds increased by as much as 75% in March and April over January and February.

During Operation Safe Driver Week, PSC officers will increase patrols to monitor commercial vehicles on interstates and highways. We know where the trouble spots are and will concentrate attention on those zones. And while speeding is this year's highlighted infraction, officers will pull over any commercial driver who engages in unsafe driving behavior. For example, they look for distracted driving, unsecured loads, failure to use a seat belt, following too closely, improper lane change, reckless or aggressive driving, failure to obey traffic control devices, and evidence of drunk or drugged driving.

Drivers who are pulled over may receive a warning or a citation. Citations provide a great incentive to drive safely because fines for certain traffic violations can exceed \$1,000 in addition to court costs.

While special programs like Operation Safe Driver Week draw attention to law enforcement, far more significant is the fact that PSC officers patrol West Virginia's highways regularly. They are constantly on guard against unsafe commercial vehicles that endanger other travelers. Our officers are a major force in the effort to keep you safe every time you venture onto the roads of our beautiful state.

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