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MEAD PAPER TRUCK SAFETY – VOLUNTARY INSPECTION DAY

Trucks/Trucking: safety

February 2001



Fig. 1: A log truck driver and state patrol officer inspect a log truck together.

INTRODUCTION: To ensure safety along Michigan's highways, forest product haulers have begun participating in a voluntary truck inspection day. Mead Paper, Michigan Operations, has sponsored a "Truck Safety Voluntary Inspection Day" at its mill in Escanaba in both 1999 and 2000 in an effort to improve safety awareness of all drivers, create additional dialogue among drivers, law enforcement officers, and other safety officials, while also increasing public understanding.

GENERAL FEATURES: The Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Division is charged with enforcing all regulations relating to truck safety. During the Truck Safety Day, the State Police provide six officers who conduct voluntary inspections of pulpwood trucks at the Mead mill woodyard. In each of the two annual events, 50 to 60 truckers volunteered to have their truck and

trailer units inspected. The inspection is thorough and conducted in the same fashion as it would be if the truck had been stopped on the highway. The check includes air pressure systems, brakes, lights, steering mechanisms, tires, securement, and the physical integrity of the unit. Any defects found are recorded, but *no tickets are issued for violations*. Serious defects that are immediate safety hazards result in the truck being kept on-site until the defect is corrected. Only a few such defects have been discovered in the over 100 inspections completed, and all were corrected by day's end.

OPERATION: The location of the inspection is immediately adjacent to the Mead scalehouse. The location is a flat, paved road, which is closed to traffic during the Safety Day. Mead provides lunches and snacks for all participants.

A representative of the Michigan Center for Truck Safety has also attended both events and is available to discuss the importance of truck safety with the drivers and to describe training and the other educational opportunities that the Center provides to forest product haulers. Michigan Technological University Transportation and Keweenaw Research Centers also participate. They have been available to discuss a new project dealing with log truck safety analysis and condition of log truck trailers.

An added benefit to the participating truckers is that this inspection qualifies as their annual required inspection. Each truck is issued a State Police Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) decal, thus saving the time and expense of having an inspection done elsewhere.



Mead's Central District Procurement and Transportation Manager plan the event. Ahead of time, the Manager:

- coordinates a date with the Mead Woodyard personnel, the State Police, and the Michigan Center for Truck Safety;
- communicates the event to truckers through the news media, scalehouse notices, and personal contacts;
- arranges a shelter tent and food to be brought in for participants;
- arranges for internal and external media coverage of the event;
- announces the theme: "Truck Safety is Everyone's Responsibility."



Fig. 2: Mead's Truck Safety Day allows log truckers and state police to interact constructively on safety issues.

APPLICATION: All truckers of forest products are invited and encouraged to participate. The truckers themselves suggested the inspection during log truck focus group meetings held in 1998. It allows the drivers and officers to have a relaxed interaction in a safe location, with the drivers understanding that no citations will be written if minor infractions are found.

Local news media have covered the event. The television, radio and newspaper coverage has resulted in a more positive impression by the public towards the professionalism of the forest product haulers and their willingness to participate voluntarily in the inspections.

This partnership for truck safety between Mead, the logging industry, and law enforcement enhances safety on the highways and promotes a spirit of cooperation between law enforcement and the forest industry.

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