

THE SOURCE

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THE FUTURE IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

“Look, Ma, no hands!”

How often did you say that when you were a kid and finally mastered riding your bike without touching the handlebars? Fast-forward a few decades—to today, in fact—and imagine the trucker in your rear-view mirror saying the same thing. Crazy? Futuristic? Not exactly. On May 6, 2015, the first self-driving truck—Daimler’s Freightliner Inspiration—hit the road in Nevada, where it has been licensed to operate.

According to Daimler, these trucks will be in a decade-long testing phase, racking up over a million miles before being deemed fit for industry adoption. Proponents say that the technology, once perfected, will reduce accidents by lessening the chance of human error, keeping the vehicle at safe speed parameters and within lane markers, boosting productivity, and cutting emissions. According to one study, driverless trucks could reduce the number of collisions by 70%.

The Inspiration uses a combination of GPS, radar and video cameras to navigate on open roads, freeing the driver to take breaks, check emails, communicate with the office. To the extent that a qualified driver must be present to take control if the situation warrants, it is not literally entirely *driverless*. And, in fact, unlike Google’s self-driving cars, which have driven over 1.7 million miles, mostly in urban areas, and have only been involved in 11 accidents (all caused by humans), the self-driving trucks are designed to be driverless only on interstates and rural roads, not on city streets. At least not for now.

Critics are concerned about potential job losses in the trucking industry. It is estimated that there are 3.5 million professional truck drivers in the U.S., and an additional 5.2 million people employed within the trucking industry who are not drivers. That’s about 8.7 million good middle-class jobs, some of which could be in jeopardy by the driverless technology. In addition, there are many businesses that benefit from the trucking industry, such as restaurants and motels, that could feel the pinch. And if those businesses are adversely affected, then their workers are also affected, and by extension their communities may be affected by a drop in consumer spending.

But this only gives rise to speculation, and the fact is that, while maybe the trucks can drive themselves, they still can’t load and unload freight. They still

cannot perform maintenance. They cannot operate in severe weather conditions. And they cannot navigate ever-changing connecting roads that may not have been GPS-mapped. So, drivers and industry support personnel will still be a part of the equation for a long time to come. And - here’s the good thing—what driverless trucks also cannot



OF INTEREST

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THE FUTURE IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

do is drink alcohol, take drugs, text while driving, or nod off at the wheel. We do not mean to imply that this is an endemic problem, or that a majority of drivers are prone to any or all of these bad habits. On the contrary, most drivers are professionals who operate their rigs in a safe and responsible manner. But these things do happen, and accidents result.

Another approach being worked on is platooning, in which trucks form a convoy of two or more vehicles in a tight conga line behind the leader. What would otherwise be considered unsafe tailgating becomes safe due to the constant electronic communication between the trucks, with the drivers of the trailing trucks maintaining directional steering while the truck's technology takes care of the throttle and brake. This also creates a fuel savings of up to 10% for the trailing trucks as they travel in the wake of the leader and no longer have air at 65 mph working against them.

The lead truck realizes some fuel savings as well—up to 5%—as the trailing unit fills up the aerodynamic “hole” in its back and negates the drag that normally occurs.

As time goes on and technology evolves, it is almost inevitable that the trailing units may ultimately not require a driver on board at all. Of course, that's not taking into account the random and sometimes unpredictable behavior of motorists. Like the guy who might think it's a good idea to cut off a trailing truck because he's about to miss his exit. Public awareness will need to become part of the way forward.

In the final analysis, if trucks were ever to become truly driverless—and some believe that eventually they will—a more significant question is one of legality, liability, and ethics, related to how a computer-controlled vehicle should react in certain

situations, when an accident is unavoidable and the vehicle has to decide what to do and who to harm.

Take for example a scenario in which a fully self-driving truck unexpectedly hits an object and loses control. Perhaps a piece of a bridge has unexpectedly fallen onto the roadway, or something has gotten loose from a vehicle in front of it, or a vehicle has braked suddenly and hard. The truck may at this point have to make a choice: veer to the right into a minivan where a mother and her children are walking and would certainly be killed, or veer to the left where three elderly people have just stepped into the crosswalk. Or on a highway, do you cut off the school bus or the minivan?

A human at the wheel would have to make this very difficult decision in a moment, but if a computer is driving the truck that decision would have to have been made in advance by programmers who created the algorithm. Clearly lawmakers would have to establish the criteria, which would undoubtedly be the standard of “what would a reasonable man do?”, and if that principle was followed when building the algorithm, then duty of care would have been applied. The question of legality and liability will have been addressed. But ethically who would want to have to write the algorithm that makes the decision about who gets sacrificed?

There is still a lot to work out, both in terms of technology and cyber safety, as well as in social, ethical, and legal obstacles. But make no mistake, in the not too distant future autonomous trucks will be coming to a roadway near you.

SOURCE: Journal of Commerce—6/15/15; BBC News—5/26/15; Bloomberg View—5-27-15; Freightliner Inspiration.com press release—5/5/15.

THE DANGERS OF DRIVING AND (NOT) DRINKING

A recent study conducted by Loughborough University in England has suggested that driving while dehydrated, even mildly so, is just as detrimental as driving drunk. In fact, the study showed that the number of mistakes made in simulated driving tests while mildly dehydrated were the same as someone who was just over the legal blood alcohol limit.

Mild dehydration can cause headaches, weakness, dizziness and fatigue, leading to compromised alertness and ability to concentrate. As the temperatures outside rise near and into triple digits, it is especially important to stay well hydrated.

This is a particular warning to drivers, since the study cites that “anecdotal reports suggest that many drivers avoid drinking on long journeys to minimize bathroom stops.”

And if you think that your vehicle's A/C will help the problem, think again. The dry air is responsible for accumulated evaporative water loss.

So be safe and have one for the road—water, that is.

SOURCE: Landline—7/21/15; Loughborough University website.



FMC CALLS FOR TRANSPARENCY IN PIERPASS PROGRAM

In a July 20 press release, FMC Chairman Mario Cordero called for more transparency from PierPASS in response to the company's announcement of a 4% increase in the Traffic Mitigation Fee (TMF), from \$66.50 to \$69.17 per TEU.

"In light of this fee increase, I believe that PierPASS and the thirteen terminals at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach should justify the continued need for the TMF, as well as the sustainability of annual TMF increases," said Cordero. He went on to call for more transparency about the cost to operate off-peak shifts and the revenue collected from the TMF.

"I...believe it is time for PierPASS to critically self-assess its performance along five key dimensions: sun setting, service levels, fairness, transparency, and performance metrics."

PierPASS is a not-for-profit company created by marine terminal operators (MTO) in 2005 to address multi-terminal issues such as congestion, security, and air quality. It was formed at a time when record container volumes in 2005-07 were spilling out into the neighborhoods, aggravating congestion already present from vehicular traffic and generating stern warnings from legislators to fix the problem or face legislation that would fix it for them.

The solution was to require all international container terminals in the two ports to establish five new off-peak shifts. As an incentive to use the off-peak shifts and to cover the added cost of them, a TMF in the amount of \$40.00 per TEU was

instituted for cargo moving during peak hours. Chairman Cordero questions the continued charging of the TMF because it was not intended to go on indefinitely, but to sunset after a critical mass of container cargo had moved from peak to off-peak shifts. He pointed out that ten years later the TMF is still being imposed and increased even though nearly 55% of the cargo subject to the fee now moves during off-peak shifts.

He has also asked PierPASS to justify another increase when the costs of off-peak gates have decreased. Only four of the thirteen terminals currently provide five off-peak shifts per week, and one of them will drop its weekend shift effective July 25th.

Coming under the microscope as well is the issue of fairness in terms of what portion of container traffic bears the burden of this fee, and the issue of transparency in terms of the calculation of the fee vs the cost of the program.

Performance is the last key issue cited. Drayage truckers and shippers have requested that each terminal provide data on truck queue and dwell times so that they can better utilize their time. So far the MTO's have rebuffed these requests.

It should be noted that Cordero was a Long Beach harbor commissioner at the time PierPASS was founded, so has first-hand knowledge of what prompted the formation of the program. You can read his [full statement here](#).

SOURCE: FMC Newsroom press release—7/20/15.

HIGHWAY SAFETY TIPS FROM THE PROS

With the summer driving season well underway, drivers from the American Trucking Association's Share the Road program are urging motorists to exercise caution and good judgment. They have shared some tips and tactics for safety:

- **Buckle up.** It's the most effective way to increase your safety on the road.
- **Slow down.** With extra congestion on the roads, speeding becomes even more dangerous. And keep sufficient room between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- **Don't drive impaired.** If you've downed one beer too many, don't get behind the wheel.
- **Be aware of trucks.** Trucks are heavier and take longer to brake; avoid cutting in front of them. Be aware of a truck's

blind spots—if you can't see the driver in his or her mirrors, then the driver can't see you.

- **Plan ahead.** Know your exit name(s) and number(s) before you get on the road and watch for their signs. Unexpected lane changes to exit can cause accidents. Also, plan ahead by preparing your vehicle—wipers and fluids, radiator and cooling system, tires properly inflated.
- **Leave early.** Road conditions may change due to congestion or inclement weather, so give yourself plenty of time to avoid anxiety over possible delays.
- **Eyes on the road.** Goes without saying—distracted driving is an accident waiting to happen. Pull over to use your cell phone and never, ever text while driving.

HAVE FUN, STAY SAFE!

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TRIVIA

1. The Romans referred to the hot and humid days of summer when the star, Sirius, rose at around the same time as the Sun—a time that was believed to be evil, bringing pestilence, madness and disease—as *dies caniculares*. What is the popular name for this time period now?
2. Where in the human body do you find the only part which has a name with a dog-related origin?
3. If you are “going to see a man about a dog,” what are you doing—placing a bet at a racetrack, conducting a shady deal, buying a dog, or going to the bathroom?
4. What word meaning “spunky and quarrelsome” has its origin in the name of a type of dog—sassy, feisty, brazen, or cheeky?

[Click here for answers to Trivia questions.](#)