

## Steel coil truck inspectors write 60 tickets

By Niki Doyle, News Staff Writer

Since Monday, Alabama state troopers have inspected 120 trucks hauling loads of steel coils and have written 60 tickets for violations.

Inspectors put 50 trucks out of service, which means the driver had to park the truck until he corrected the violation. The 60 tickets include tickets written to vehicles put out of service.

Most of the violations were for unsecured loads, but some drivers were cited for equipment violations such as bare tires and malfunctioning turn signals, said Sgt. Tim Sartain of the Birmingham State Troopers Office.

For a load to be considered secure, the coils must be fastened with chains and secured with wooden blocks, which keep the coils elevated and the chains taut. The chains must be adequate for half the weight of the load, Sartain said. For example, a driver hauling 40,000 pounds of steel coils must have enough chains to hold 20,000 pounds.

"One guy had no braces on the middle coils, and he was hauling four coils that weighed almost 8,000 pounds apiece," Sartain said. "That's four coils that people could have had to dodge."

Sartain said a steel coil can weigh as much as 44,000 pounds.

Tickets for load violations range from \$125 to \$250, depending on the county. Most tickets in Jefferson County were \$150, Sartain said.

"If this guy is an interstate hauler, it's going on his federal DOT record," Sartain said. "If we have a company that has continuous violations, then the motor vehicle folks can take action against that company."

Inspectors have seen trucks from as far away as Texas and Kentucky, Sartain said. Checkpoints are scattered across the state, including places along I-65 North and on I-20/59 near Tallapoosa Street.

The barrage of inspections resulted from an accident June 8 in which a steel coil rolled off a flatbed truck on I-20/59. The coil caused more than \$200,000 damage to the interstate and injured a woman whose vehicle struck the coil.

Different types of steel are wrapped into coils for transportation. Sheet steel can be used in the production of appliances, storage tanks and panels for buildings and autos. Heavy plate steel is typically used for bridge decks and railcars.

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