

Initiative to reduce car-truck fatalities along I-59

By Candace White

BIRMINGHAM - AL -

The Department of Public Safety is renewing efforts to prevent crashes involving commercial motor vehicles with TACT: Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks. It is a highway safety initiative focusing on the unsafe driving behaviors that contribute to serious and fatal crashes between personal and commercial motor vehicles.

This particular enforcement and educational program made possible by a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) grant will target the Interstate 59 corridor between Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, said Col. Hugh B. McCall, director of Public Safety. Beginning June 13 and running through the end of the month, this initiative will include intensive enforcement, TACT billboards and news media involvement.

Speeding, making unsafe lane changes, following too closely, failing to signal lane changes, failing to yield the right of way and driving aggressively are risky driving behaviors that can lead to crashes with injuries and fatalities.

Alabama state troopers have been targeting sections of roadways identified as high-risk areas for crashes involving commercial vehicles, McCall said. And the University of Alabama's Center for Advanced Public Safety (CAPS) is conducting pre- and post-initiative analysis of serious and fatal crashes involving commercial vehicles both to guide enforcement activities and to gauge their effectiveness.

Studies show that automobile driver-related causal factors are indicated for the automobile driver in more than 80 percent of the fatal crashes involving a passenger vehicle and a commercial motor vehicle.

The Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama Trucking Association have partnered with Public Safety in the TACT program, using posters, electronic message boards and displays on commercial motor vehicles to help educate motorists about sharing the road safely.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration initiated TACT in 2004 as a pilot program in the state of Washington. Based on the success of the pilot, the FMCSA has encouraged other states to participate. Alabama is now one of 15 states that have received federal funding to implement TACT programs.