

The Communiqué

Preventable Accident Examples

1. Tractor-trailer driver Mary had just completed a left-lane, curbside delivery to a store on a one-way street in town. As Mary attempted to make her way back into rush-hour traffic, a double-parked delivery truck forced her to seek the right lane. A car (OV1) already in the right lane had stopped, making room for Mary to change lanes. In the meantime, another car (OV2) was directly behind the trailer, the rear of which was still in the left lane. As Mary started to make her move, OV2 tried to maneuver around the slow-moving truck into the right lane. At the same time, Mary began to accelerate, without checking her mirrors, and OV2's left fender was struck by the tractor's right front bumper.

A determination of "preventable" was made by the accident review committee, noting that Mary should have been more cautious, anticipating the potential for a squeeze-play accident and checking her mirrors.



2. As tractor-trailer driver Bill turned right onto a two-lane highway, the radio announced a traffic accident a few miles ahead. Minutes later, a state trooper, less than a mile behind Bill, was dispatched to the crash site. The state trooper turned on his siren and lights and sped toward the scene. In his West Coast mirror, Bill could see the trooper's car fast approaching and subsequently slowed down, pulling partially off the road. Upon doing so, the right front corner of the trailer smashed into a low-hanging limb of a large tree.

The accident was deemed preventable. Claiming he had to yield to the trooper, Bill argued against the preventable determination. However, according to the accident review committee, Bill should not have driven partially off the road without first looking ahead for obvious hazards.

Accident Prevention is NOT happenstance...

Accident Prevention is a planned event!

3. On a multi-lane highway with moderate traffic, a tractor-trailer driven by Joe was traveling in the right lane, until the driver noticed an "Exit Only" sign and moved into the center lane. At that point, the driver saw an approaching vehicle in his West Coast mirror. Without warning the vehicle veered left, across the truck's path, and accelerated, nearly missing the front of the tractor. Another vehicle was fast approaching from behind, but Joe had neglected to check his right-side mirror so he did not see it. As the exit lane ended, that vehicle tried to move left, across the truck's path, but was not so lucky. The tractor's right front fender was struck.

Joe received a warning letter from his safety director, charging him with a preventable accident. The ruling was reaffirmed by the accident review committee, citing that after nearly being hit by one vehicle, a professional truck driver should have immediately checked the mirrors for more trouble.