

News Release Minister Michael O'Brien

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Minister for Police
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Minister for Correctional Services
Minister for Road Safety



Thursday, 11 April 2013

Share the road safely with heavy vehicles

Road Safety Minister Michael O'Brien today launched a new road safety campaign to increase motorists' awareness about sharing the road with heavy vehicles.

Mr O'Brien said the *Share the Road* campaign was aimed at educating motorists about safely overtaking heavy vehicles and keeping safe distances.

"We are launching this campaign as we head into the school holidays when more cars and cyclists are on the road," Mr O'Brien said.

"What is concerning is the mistakes being made by motorists when driving near heavy vehicles.

"These include following too closely, unsafe speeds, unsafe overtaking, driving between large trucks and changing lanes abruptly in front of trucks.

"When you consider the limitations truck drivers have, the consequences of these mistakes can be fatal.

"When a truck and a car collide at speed, there's rarely a second chance."

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) has worked with the heavy vehicle industry to produce two educational media clips that educate motorists on safe driving and overtaking heavy vehicles.

Mr O'Brien said figures show heavy vehicle operators are responsible for just one in four fatal crashes involving a passenger vehicle, pedestrian or cyclist.

"These figures clearly indicate the need for other road users to update their road rules knowledge," he said.

"I urge motorists to look at the website, watch the educational clips and make sure they share the road safely."

South Australian Road Transport Association Executive Director Steve Shearer said too often trucks were blamed for the devastation that follows a collision with a car, cyclist or pedestrian.

"For the five years from 2008 to 2012, there were 77 fatal crashes involving heavy vehicles of which 86 per cent involved a light vehicle, pedestrian or cyclist," Mr Shearer said.

"The heavy vehicle driver was deemed responsible in just 26 per cent of these crashes.

"Even driving defensively, it takes a heavy vehicle operator at least 200m to stop.

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“The trauma when a collision does occur is often felt just as much by the helpless heavy vehicle driver as it is by the family, friends and community of those who have been killed or injured.”

Motorists can receive fines of up to \$265 for unsafe overtaking and could also be charged with dangerous driving.

To view the videos or for more information visit www.dpti.sa.gov.au/roadsafety