

Newsbreak

October 2019 Publication of the
Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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Advanced Heavy- Duty Training with Miller Industries' Tom Luciano



It was September of 2016 since the MPTA hosted a two-day Advanced Heavy- Duty Training class featuring Miller Industries' Tom Luciano. In all reality, MPTA membership is blessed to have Tom here for two days. As most of you know, when Mr. Luciano comes to town, which only means one thing... a disciplined, hard nose approach to learning the techniques of Advanced heavy- duty towing and recovery.

Between both days, over 40 towing operators/students attended this highly anticipated event as all were not disappointed. Spending valued time in the classroom learning chains, straps, pivot points and leverage, later trading in the classroom textbooks for a great learning experience in the field. MPTA Board of Directors also taught our "students of tomorrow" both days as well as setting up scenarios and assisting with rigging and hook-ups.

Congratulations to those who attended this two-day Advanced Heavy- Duty Training featuring Miller Industries Tom Luciano. We are fortunate as an Association to have Tom back up here every couple of years. So... hope to see you next time! Special thanks to the all the MPTA board of Directors and Jay Thompson lending their time and knowledge, all of our Sponsors for this great event and the team at Miller Industries, Fred, Kipp and Tom for an educational two days!

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**If you would like to make a
contribution to help with the legislative
efforts, please send your donations to:**

**MPTA
2886 Middle Street
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Fun Facts about Halloween

- ◆ The idea of trick or treating came from a Celtic tradition originating in ancient times. The ancient Celts would put treats on their doorsteps and in the streets to provide offerings to the spirits of Samhain.
- ◆ Legend has it, Jack O'Lanterns get their name from an old Irish story of a man named Jack who liked to trick the devil and because of his tricky ways, was barred from entering both heaven and hell, instead, he was forced to wander the earth, where he used his lanterns to wave people away from their intended paths.
- ◆ Halloween colors are what they are for a reason. There are several colors that you almost always see used in relation to Halloween (orange, black, brown and gold) Here's why these colors are the chosen ones:
 - ◆ Orange – Orange is known as a symbol of strength.
 - ◆ Black – Black is known as a symbol of death.
 - ◆ 3. Brown and Gold – These colors are typically in the symbolism of harvest.
- ◆ Historically, the owl has been one of the most popular Halloween images. This is because, during medieval times in Europe, owls were seen as witches. It was said that hearing an owl's call was a sign that someone was about to die.
- ◆ Houdini died on Halloween. In a strange twist of events, Harry Houdini, who is considered by many to be the most famous magician of all time, died on Halloween. His death was caused by appendicitis, which was brought on by 3 blows to the stomach he took during one of his acts.
- ◆ Major money is spent on Halloween. Did you know that Americans spend almost 10 billion dollars per year on Halloween? *That's BILLION with a B. That is a lot of money to be spent on candy and costumes. Each consumer typically spends about \$80 dollars per year on their Halloween goodies.*

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Heavy Duty Tow School September 2019 Featuring Tom Luciano



Thank You to our Heavy Duty Training Partners



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Emergency Lighting for Towing in Minnesota and Nearby States.

How often have you wondered what the actual rules are regarding what lights are required, when they can be used and, most importantly, how they are regulated?

Lighting standards are guided by several sources, including the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, specifically FMVSS 108. This standard is the basis for state-level regulations in all 50 states related to standard lighting equipment such as taillights, turn signals, headlights and reflectors. This standard is why all vehicles in the U.S. have similar lighting systems and uniform colors (red to the rear, amber to the front or side, etc.)

By contrast, emergency lighting is not regulated on the federal level, leaving it open for 50 or more different interpretations of what is safe and effective. There are guidelines published by several sources, like the National Fire Protection Association, that give sound advice on what colors to use and how to use them for the most effective advanced warning. This mixed approach to emergency lighting standards is often confusing, especially for motorists traveling across the country.

Emergency lighting is not a traffic control device, as it is merely intended to signal approaching motorists that there is an unusual event occurring that requires extra caution. Highway responders often forget this and develop a false sense of security when their warning lights are displayed, especially when the colors are any combination other than amber.

Although red and blue lights tend to portray a greater sense of urgency among the general motoring public, as well as command greater respect, they do not offer any greater protection than amber, white or any other color of warning light.

Less Is More

Numerous studies have indicated that motorists are often momentarily blinded or otherwise distracted by emergency warning lights. That's not to say people are drawn to flashing lights like a moth to a flame, however emergency lights can create a hazard. It is accepted practice among law enforcement and fire departments to turn off most of their emergency lighting once on scene.

Most emergency vehicles are equipped with multiple levels of lighting control, allowing operators to turn off the forward-facing lights on divided highways, reduce intensity or speed of the flash or even cut specific colors from the display.

The same applies to work lighting; only the lighting that is absolutely needed should be illuminated, and never if it will blind approaching traffic. For example, there is no need to have the lower (under body) work lights illuminated on rollback carriers while loading a vehicle onto the deck. As you tilt the deck level, those lights will become exposed and could blind an approaching vehicle—causing them to strike your truck, you or your customer!

In developing a uniform national standard, we need to ask how we currently use emergency lighting, how we should use it and what best practices can we learn from other responding agencies. Perhaps we should consider voluntary use of directional warning devices, remote-mounted lighting devices and even lighting devices mounted on our person, such as lighted safety vests and other garments.

Some best practices that are highly recommended include:

- Keeping all lighting devices clean and well maintained.
- Individual control of front, back and side lighting, separated into zones.
- Work lights on individual switches for upper, mid-body and lower level.
- Avoid mounting strobe lights too close to DOT-required lighting.

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- Turn off as many lights as possible while on-scene, including headlights and other forward-facing lights that may blind others.
- Use brighter settings in daylight; reduce light output levels at night.
- Make sure in-cab indicators are working to avoid driving with lights activated unintentionally.
- Use tow lights on towed vehicles rather than using overhead beacons.

As always, be aware of the laws in your home state, as well as any other states you may work in, and comply with those regulations. Your police contract may have additional stipulations on emergency lighting use; six states even require approval from the local law enforcement agency or a state permit before installing or using any warning lights.

Stop and think for a moment how often you have been blinded by lights from another emergency or highway maintenance vehicle, especially in construction zones. If a trained professional that is very aware of what those lights mean can be distracted or blinded momentarily, what happens when the average driver comes upon your own warning lights?

Stay safe, watch your back and please be mindful of how you use your warning and work lights.

Warning Light Regulations for towing nearby Minnesota and Minnesota.

Illinois – Amber and **White**, required when towing and headlights required 625 ILCS 5/12-215(b)1

Iowa – Amber, stationary only 321.423

Michigan – Amber, **Red** allowed when at crash or disabled 257.698(5)(f)

Minnesota – Amber and **Red** required, amber may be used in tow 168B.16

North Dakota – Amber and **White**, stationary 39-01-03.1 39-01-01

South Dakota – Amber, stationary or in-tow allowed, not required 32-17-10

Wisconsin – Amber and **Red** required, amber may be used when slow moving 347.26(6)

MPTA Hosts Annual Meeting

Following the first day of MPTA's Advanced Heavy Training course featuring Miller Industries' Tom Luciano, on Tuesday, September 24th, the MPTA hosted their Annual Meeting at Jimmy's Food & Drink in Vadnais Heights. As always, the Annual Meeting is a great opportunity for towing members to share thoughts about the upcoming year. Items discussed were legal and legislative issues, education and continuing how to help our towing industry be the best it can be.

This year was the fourth year MPTA members casted their votes by a mailing in their votes. There were four very respective towing members/ operators on the ballot. The unfortunate situation, we can only allow three to be voted in. The three board of Directors voted on the board of directors are Lance Burda - Burda's Towing, Lonnie Krackow – Borkowski Towing & Salvage and Jenn Pearson- Twin Cities. Wrecker Sales Inc. Just like last year, the mailing of votes, the election results were very close. I encourage every MPTA member in the future to attend our Annual Meeting, as this is your meeting. Get to know your fellow towing operators while discussing our industry in an open forum.

Annual Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts Report:

In 2018:

- 79,215 traffic crashes were reported to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS)
 - 146,107 motor vehicles and 172,908 people were involved in these crashes
 - 381 people died and 27,877 people were injured
- Estimated economic cost to Minnesota: \$1,875,540,500

Truck crashes

- In 2018, there were 4,623 truck-involved traffic crashes reported to the Department of Public Safety.
 - This represents a 7% increase from the previous year. There were 43 fatal truck crashes, killing a total of 44 people.
 - In addition, there were 1,345 people injured in truck-related crashes.
- Pickup trucks, buses, and vans are not counted as trucks in this section.

Contributing factors in truck crashes

- Contributing factors listed by officers are very similar for truck and non-truck drivers. About half of contributing factors were attributed to the truck driver, and half to the non-truck driver.
 - Of all contributing factors reported for truck crashes, 27% were related to road surface conditions. Drivers of trucks were most frequently cited for following too closely (7%).
- The most commonly cited factor for non-truck drivers was failure to yield right of way (10%).

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/reports-statistics/Pages/crash-facts.aspx>

Marrin, Matthew (FMCSA) <Matthew.Marrin@dot.gov>

FHWA National Traffic Incident Responder Awareness Week - November 10-16, 2019

Join our Incident Responder Partners and Be part of the TEAM!

Incident response is always on our minds.

Every minute of everyday emergency responders across the country work to help save lives at the scene of traffic incidents. Too many are struck on scene. Too many die. The goal of National Traffic Incident Response Awareness Week is, for the fourth year, to reach out to every responder, and to every driver, and to every passenger, to make it more clear that every person has a role to play. Stay tuned here for resources to help you reach out to your communities, to your organizations, and to your hero responders.

Follow this link to learn more: <http://timnetwork.org/traffic-incident-response-awareness-week/>





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MPTA Hosts Two-Day Advanced Light Duty Tow School



On September 10th and 11th the MPTA supported our towing operators with a 2-day advanced light duty tow school. MPTA board directors Ron Feist and Ron Gardas Jr. taught the early classroom portion of the school with new information and safety statistics and everyday basics of getting ready for each towing shift. With an ever-changing industry, always nice to open the classroom up for instruction and FAQ's. Students were taught everything from size of chains, straps, pressure points, Lever's, recovery and even how to better prepare yourself mentally and professionally.

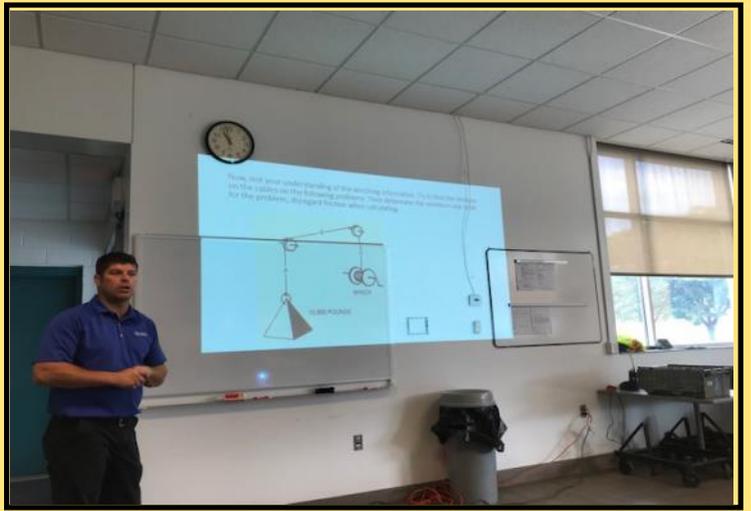
With over 25 students in attendance, MPTA board directors hosted several training sessions featuring difficult hook ups, recovery situations, roll-overs, working load limits and experiencing use of chains and straps getting a feel for what our industry has to offer. Although the school gives you a great "Hands on" experience, it can only prepare you for the "real thing!" Teaching student's the advanced lessons of recovering vehicles in a tough environment while learning the "Do's and Do not's" of our industry.

MPTA Board Directors sponsored the event providing many vehicles and the use of their equipment. The students did not disappoint. They were promised to get hands on training while getting dirty- just like every MPTA sponsored tow school. Every school the MPTA conducts, all of us learn more from the instructors as well as from our students. Special thanks to Ron Feist & Ron Gardas Jr. for teaching recovery fundamentals in the classroom as the well as Many MPTA Board of Directors and Jay Thompson assisting in the classroom and recovery sessions. Thank you to Twin Cities Transport & Recovery and MPTA board directors for many of the salvaged vehicles as well as Twin Cities Wrecker Sales for the necessary equipment.

Shout out to the great people at MNDOT for allowing us to use their facility. Together we support our industry, but more importantly our professionalism. I would say when one looks at the time, money and personal commitment, at the end of the day, it's all well worth it!

Hope to see you or your employees at the next MPTA endorsed tow school!





MINNESOTA
Professional Towing Association

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

DRUG & ALCOHOL CLEARINGHOUSE

- ✓ Record
- ✓ Consent
- ✓ Query
- ✓ Safety

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(limited or full)

- ✓ Flat per query rate (\$1.25), for limited and full queries
- ✓ Bundles customized to meet your business needs and never expire
- ✓ Options are available for high-volume users, see: <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/Query/Unlimited>

Beginning fall 2019, registered employers will log into their Clearinghouse accounts to purchase their query plan.

Query plans may be purchased from the FMCSA Clearinghouse only.

Query Bundle	Plan Cost
1	\$1.25
2	\$2.50
3	\$3.75
4	\$5.00
5	\$6.25
10	\$12.50
20	\$25.00
50	\$62.50
100	\$125.00
150	\$187.50
200	\$250.00
300	\$375.00
500	\$625.00
1,000	\$1,250.00
1,500	\$1,875.00
2,000	\$2,500.00
2,500	\$3,125.00
5,000	\$6,250.00
7,500	\$9,375.00

Purchasing a query plan enables employers, and their designated consortia/third-party administrators (C/TPAs), to conduct queries on prospective and current drivers in the Clearinghouse.

About Queries

A query is an electronic check in the Clearinghouse, conducted by an employer or their designated C/TPA, to determine if current or prospective employees are prohibited from performing safety-sensitive functions, such as operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV), due to unresolved drug and alcohol program violations.

There are two types of queries:

- **LIMITED QUERIES** check for the presence of information in the queried driver's Clearinghouse record. Driver consent is obtained outside the Clearinghouse.
- **FULL QUERIES** disclose to employers and designated C/TPAs detailed information about any resolved or unresolved violations in a driver's Clearinghouse record.

If a limited query returns a result that there is information recorded in the Clearinghouse about the queried driver, and the employer follows up with a full query to access the detailed violation information, the employer will only be charged once for both queries.

Questions?

Email: clearinghouse@dot.gov
Web: <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov>

Why do I need to purchase a query plan?

Employers are charged a fee for conducting queries in the Clearinghouse. Employers must purchase a query plan to ensure they or their designated C/TPAs can conduct queries. C/TPAs cannot purchase queries on behalf of employers.

Note: Working with a C/TPA to manage a drug and alcohol testing program is a requirement of all owner-operators.

The Clearinghouse final rule requires that employers conduct queries:

- As part of any pre-employment driver investigation.
- At least annually for every CDL driver currently employed.

Which query plan is right for me?

The query bundle you purchase will depend on the number of queries you will need to conduct.

Not sure how many queries you will need to conduct?

Select a query bundle large enough to cover the number of CDL drivers you currently employ. You can purchase additional plans as needed.



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Motor Carrier
Safety Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

August 13, 2019

ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

This is a notice that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) currently is in the process of revising its guidance to clarify that 49 CFR 383.93(a)(2)(i) and (ii) do not require passenger (P) and school bus (S) endorsements for commercial motor vehicle drivers driving an empty bus from the manufacturer to the local distributor or in a driveaway-towaway operation, provided (1) the driver has a bill of lading in his/her person indicating that the trip is for delivery only and (2) the vehicle is empty of any passengers other than the driver. The P and S endorsements are intended primarily to ensure that the driver has the knowledge and skills needed to transport passengers safely and help them evacuate the vehicle in case of an emergency. Those qualifications are not relevant when the bus is empty. Under those circumstances, the vehicle operates as a straight truck. Because FMCSA's view is that the regulations do not require P or S endorsements in these circumstances, it does not intend to take enforcement action against drivers who operate in these circumstances without one or both endorsements.

This Notice creates no individual rights of action and establishes no precedent for future determinations.

**Charles J. Fromm
Deputy Chief Counsel**

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Scanlon	Blaine Brothers 218-879-6681	<u>IOWA</u>			
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				<u>Uniforms</u>	
				Cintas Brad Beyer 763-391-5266	

UPCOMING EVENT

MPTA Board Meeting

October 22, 2019

6:00 pm Dinner

6:30-8:30 pm Meeting

MPTA Office

2886 Middle Street

Little Canada, MN 55117