

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEAVY VEHICLE DRIVER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT:

The freight industry is one of the major players that contribute to the development of the economy of South Africa. About 80% of freight in South Africa is transported by road. As a result, heavy vehicle crashes occurring on South Africa's roads are becoming a far too familiar sight. In addition to loss of life, heavy vehicle crashes causes a great deal of damage to property, the environment, and the economy. Part of the problem might be a lack of experience and training for truck drivers. The study compares education and training levels, the amount of time spent on education, the quality of available training and education facilities in South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world. Findings indicate that currently very few formal education and training facilities for heavy vehicle driver are available in SA. Most drivers receive in-house training at the operators where they are employed. Recommendations pertain to the fact that heavy vehicle driver education needs to take place on a formal basis and the age and experience of the drivers considered before a Professional Drivers Permit (PrDP) license issued to the driver. Formal institutions such as Further Education and Training (FET) colleges needs to, in future play a bigger role in the issuing of qualifications for drivers.