



NSW POLICE FORCE

MEDIA RELEASE



Rogue trucks putting innocent lives at risk – Operation Steel 3

Issued at 12.25pm, Thursday 18 April 2013

*****Editor's note: Images of the flat-bed, tow truck stopped in Port Botany are available by contacting Police Media on 8263 6100.*****

Officers from the NSW Police Traffic and Highway Patrol Command are again expressing concern about safety standards within the heavy vehicle industry, following the conclusion of Operation Steel 3.

The operation, which commenced at 6am Tuesday (16 April 2013) and concluded at 10pm yesterday (Wednesday 17 April 2013), resulted in more than 150 defects being issued to truck drivers in less than two days.

It has left senior police dismayed.

Operations Commander of the Traffic and Highway Patrol, Superintendent Stuart Smith, said police are fed up with rogue trucks.

“Half of the trucks we inspected were found to be dangerous in one way or another,” Supt Smith said.

“Of those that had their speed limiters checked, one in four were found to be defective.

“What will it take for some of these companies to abide by the law? “Another triple-fatal crash? Another family’s life destroyed?”

Supt Smith said Operation Steel was formulated last year, following two major crashes in which load-shifts within trucks were allegedly a contributing factor.

“Last year, we saw a number of serious crashes that we will allege were caused by trucks breaking the speed limit or carrying loads that were not properly restrained.

“In short, a truck that exceeds the speed limit, or a truck with an inadequately restrained load, is a threat to human life.

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“Based on the disappointing results we have seen over the past two days, it seems some truckies do not realise this.”

Over the two days of Operation Steel 3, police inspected 337 trucks at locations in Botany Bay, Wetherill Park and along the M5 at Kingsgrove.

Notable results from the operation include:

- 154 defects issued for a range of problems, including five with defective speed limiters, allowing the vehicles to exceed the 100km/h speed limit for trucks;
- 136 penalty notices issued for a variety of breaches, including excessive load dimensions, worn tyres and defective brakes, all of which pose major threats to the safety of other road users.

Some notable incidents from the operation include:

- One truck, inspected yesterday evening in Botany, was found to have a defective speed limiter, allowing the truck to potentially travel at 193km/h – 93km/h over the 100km/h speed limit for trucks in NSW;
- One truck grounded after being discovered with a major brake defect on the M5 in Kingsgrove yesterday morning;
- One truck stopped for a severe load breach, where a helicopter on the trailer significantly exceeded the width restrictions for truck loads;
- One flat-bed, tow truck was stopped on Foreshaw Drive, Port Botany, carrying dilapidated car parts, many of which were not secured at all.

Roads and Maritime Services Director Customer and Compliance, Peter Wells, said it was very disappointing so many trucks were still being caught with defects.

"We call on the heavy vehicle industry to maintain their trucks in good working order for the safety of all road users," Mr Wells said.

“Well maintained trucks are safer for the operator and other road users and improve profitability through reduced running costs and costs associated with enforcement.

"We encourage the industry to work with RMS and NSW Police to improve maintenance on these vehicles and comply with the law.

"The high number of defects detected in these trucks requires executives and managers of trucking companies to look hard at their maintenance and strongly reduce the level of defects in their fleet.

"No one wants to see another tragedy like the one on the M7 where a man lost his life when a container fell from the back of a truck.

"Let me be clear - we will continue with enforcement - we are not going away."

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