Selective Attention at Work Fatality File



Inattention is a Factor in a Fatal Bridge Collapse in Salado, Texas

The truck driver whose rig allegedly caused a bridge collapse, one fatality, three injuries, and a five-vehicle crash was not seriously hurt in the incident. The inability of a load to clear a bridge is among the many dangers that truck drivers face, though the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) alleges that the driver in this case had plenty of warning about the clearance problem.

Commercial truck driving is actually a very hazardous profession, and employers have a responsibility to try and keep drivers safe. When a driver falls asleep at the wheel or is dangerously inattentive, the cause can often be linked to his or her being urged to keep a schedule which doesn’t allow for a proper amount of sleep. Because 18-wheelers dwarf other vehicles on the road and often carry loads weighing 80,000 pounds or more, all details related to safety must be taken seriously.

Federal regulations restrict the number of hours that a truck driver can be on the road. The guidelines related to being off of the road are meant to guarantee that the driver is properly rested when driving. Employers should strictly abide by these federal restrictions, since a fatigued 18-wheeler driver is every bit as dangerous on our roadways as an intoxicated driver.

Inattention or distraction while driving is also extremely dangerous, and yet commercial and non-commercial drivers routinely engage in other activities that pull their attention away from the task of driving. Texting is an especially risky activity to engage in while driving because it claims the full attention of the driver for more moments than could possibly be safe.