

TRUCK TALK

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Crash Likelihood

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has been studying CDL driver violations and convictions in an effort to determine if those activities are predictors of future performance. Meaning, does getting a ticket or safety violation in the past mean that you are more likely to be involved in a crash of some sort?

The answer is YES. Violations, convictions, and crashes are all predictors of what is statistically likely to happen . . . a future crash. By analyzing data on more than 540,000 CDL drivers, the FMCSA determined that what we have all known for a long time is true; what you have done in the past is a good predictor of what you will do in the future.

The following table illustrates some of the results of the FMCSA study:

Event	Crash Likelihood Increases By
Driving too fast for conditions	62 %
Failure to yield right-of-way violation	70 %
Improper lane change violation	78 %
Past crash	87 %
Failure to maintain proper lane conviction	91 %
Improper turn conviction	94 %
Failure to yield right-of-way conviction	97 %
Improper or erratic lane change conviction	100 %
Improper turn violation	105 %
Reckless driving violation	325 %

Please note that other traffic violations and convictions not listed also increase crash risk likelihood by a significant amount.

What the table indicates is that if you have been convicted of driving too fast for conditions, your chances of being involved in a crash in the future are 62% higher than someone who hasn't. By the same token, if you have a reckless driving violation in the past, you are 325% more likely to be involved in a future crash than someone who has never had a reckless driving conviction.

Please note that statistically speaking, crash involvement likelihood increases dramatically regardless of whether the driver has a violation only or a conviction. It is the event itself that is the predictor, not the legal ramifications of the event.

So, what do you do if you, as a professional driver, find yourself as being one of the statistics listed above? Focus on the basics such as increased following distance, speed management, lane usage, be aware of your surroundings, and obey all traffic laws as well as DOT rules and regulations. You can prove the statistics wrong!

