

BENDIX SUPPORTS 30 PERCENT REDUCTION IN STOPPING DISTANCE REQUIREMENT

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Dec. 15, 2005 notice of proposed rule making to improve the stopping distance performance of truck tractors, points to the difference in mass between large trucks and passenger vehicles as a leading factor in the intensity of highway accidents. Further, it states that while large trucks operate on the same roadways as significantly lighter passenger vehicles, they may take twice as long to stop in instances of panic stop braking. In its proposal, NHTSA calls for a 20 to 30 percent reduction in the required stopping distance for large trucks.

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC and Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake LLC together maintain a position that, for the sake of highway safety, the maximum effort – a 30 percent reduction – should be made to shorten the stopping distance for large truck tractors. This 30 percent (249 foot stopping distance) reduction will bring the trucks more in line with passenger cars. The incremental benefit in terms of lives saved, accidents prevented and property damage lost is significantly greater than the cost of implementing a 30 percent reduction. Additionally, Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake has a variety of products available today to accommodate this level of reduction.

Extensive vehicle test data from Bendix, Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake and other sources confirms that through a wide variety of Bendix foundation brake configurations – including all drum brakes, all disc brakes or a combination of both – vehicles can meet or exceed a 30 percent reduction requirement. In fact, all disc truck tractors have consistently shown the ability to stop within today's regulatory standard for passenger cars (216 feet). Regardless of the configuration, the Bendix foundation brake components required to provide the necessary performance to achieve a 30 percent reduction in stopping distance are already in production in the United States today.

Bendix and Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake have developed foundation brakes that accommodate the dimension of larger drum brakes or disc brakes and ensure the proper fit within the existing wheel-end envelope. Vehicle manufacturers, who will ultimately decide what options to offer, are best positioned to comment on vehicle modifications to axles, suspension and other components to accommodate higher brake torques associated with shorter stopping distances. Fleets, meanwhile, will weigh a variety of factors – up-front cost, maintenance intervals, replacement parts, driver retention, vehicle applications, etc. – and will have different philosophies as to how they're going to spec new rigs to adhere to the regulation. Fleets will be able to make foundation brake decisions based on their own needs and preferences. NHTSA is not advocating a specific technology. The key is that fleets will still maintain foundation brake choices.

Bendix and Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake support the United States government's long-stated goal to more closely align the stopping distance requirements for passenger cars and heavy trucks for increased highway safety. A 30 percent reduction for truck tractors is an important step to further solidify NHTSA's direction, strongly reinforcing their commitment to highway safety.

For more information, contact:

Barbara Gould
Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC
(440) 329-9609
barbara.gould@bendix.com

or

Carrie Kandes
Marcus Thomas LLC
(888) 482-4455
ckandes@marcusthomasllc.com