Our strategy
A minority of large truck crashes are attributed to a mechanical problem, leading us to focus our efforts on the truck driver. Truck-at-fault crashes are usually linked to speeding, tailgating, changing lanes unsafely, failure to yield right of way and driver fatigue. Focusing on the causes of truck at-fault crashes requires law enforcement agencies to enforce unsafe driving behaviors. Our MCTD staff conducts inspections at weigh stations and performs safety compliance reviews at trucking company terminals. They also initiate enforcement operations and logbook checks along major freight routes where most truck-at-fault crashes occur. A key part of our Safety Action Plan is to conduct multi-day inspection exercises to find problem drivers. In 2018, enforcement exercises checked thousands of drivers and placed hundreds out of service for critical safety violations. While we saw an increase in weather related crashes, the overall crash rate decreased. Oregon ranks well above all states in this area because inspectors use real time data to identify trucking companies with suspect safety records and then apply training, experience and other tools to find safety problems.

About the target
The truck-at-fault crash rate target is set to a fixed baseline and adjusted when the program has met or exceeded it for a number of years. In 2013, the target was...
readjusted upward (one standard deviation higher) at a constant level through 2016.

How we are doing and how we compare
There was a total of 1,409 truck crashes in 2018, 284 less than in 2017 (1,693). It was determined that the truck was at fault in 646 of the crashes, which is down from 703 in 2017. Only 37 of these crashes were attributed to a mechanical problem with the truck. This is consistent with previous years and supports our efforts to focus on driver fitness and behavior.

Factors affecting results and what needs to be done
Along with the increased number of truck-at-fault crashes, the number of deaths associated with truck crashes increased from 50 in 2016, to 52 in 2017 and 58 in 2018. It should also be noted that a single incident can skew these numbers. Factors directly affecting this measure largely involve commercial vehicle driver fitness, qualifications and judgment. The rate of crashes is also affected by the volume of all vehicle miles traveled, not just commercial vehicle miles. It’s affected by traffic congestion, the level of road and bridge construction and maintenance work, and inclement weather. Further contributing to crash rates is the presence of law enforcement officers on the road. We are engaging many more law enforcement agencies in truck safety-related exercises to focus on making probable cause stops for speeding and other traffic violations along major freight routes where most truck-at-fault crashes happen. Because so few crashes are attributed to mechanical problems, checking the behavior and fitness of truck drivers continues to be the most effective way to reduce crashes. We continue to conduct frequent multi-day inspection exercises focusing on truck driver inspections and partner with police in exercises to stop unsafe car and truck drivers. We will continue our aggressive safety inspection efforts.

About the data
Crash data for this measure is based on the federal definition of a recordable incident – those which involve a fatality, injury or disabling damage. The ODOT Transportation Development Division’s Crash Analysis and Reporting Unit analyzes crash reports to determine which are truck-at-fault. States are rated on a quarterly basis – Good, Fair, or Poor – on completeness, timeliness, accuracy and consistency of both crash and roadside inspection data submitted to the Motor Carrier Management Information System. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rates Oregon “Good.” Mileage data for this measure is based on miles traveled in Oregon by trucks over 26,001 pounds, as determined by motor carriers’ highway-use tax reports and temporary passes purchased by short-term operators, following the national model. The truck-at-fault crash rate would be lower if it were based on miles traveled in Oregon by all trucks over 10,000 pounds and buses carrying more than 15 passengers, including the driver. Mileage figures used here are verified by MCTD auditors. The figures are also verified by financial analysts for use in Oregon’s periodic Highway Cost Allocation Study.

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Data source
ODOT Motor Carrier Division and ODOT Transportation Development Division, Crash Analysis and Reporting Unit