RCW 43.59.190 Washington state commercial truck safety and education council. (1) The Washington state commercial truck safety and education council is established in the Washington traffic safety commission to recommend programs and projects that improve the safety of the commercial truck industry through cooperative public-private programs that focus on examining crash trends and evidence-based best practices in driver education, improved regulatory compliance, industry training, and educational programs. The council shall consist of the following members, appointed by the commission:

(a) The chief of the Washington state patrol, or the chief's designee;

(b) The director of the department of licensing, or the director's designee;

(c) The secretary of the department of transportation, or the secretary's designee;

(d) The executive director of the Washington trucking associations or the executive director's designee;

(e) The director of the Washington traffic safety commission, or the director's designee;

(f) The executive director of the Washington state board for community and technical colleges, or the executive director's designee;

(g) One member of the general public;

(h) Three members from a trucking industry association or associations as representatives of the trucking industry, with consideration given to a list of six nominees representative of the trucking industry submitted by the Washington trucking association;

(i) The executive director of the workforce training and education coordination board, or the executive director's designee;

(j) One member from a labor organization recommended by the Washington state labor council.

(2) In addition, the council may, where feasible, consult with other governmental entities or individuals from the public and private sector who have a unique interest or expertise in commercial vehicle safety, training, and efficient operations.

(3) The Washington state commercial truck safety and education council must meet at least quarterly. The council shall initially convene at the call of the director of the Washington traffic safety commission, or the director's designee, no later than the third Monday in January 2027. Subsequent meetings of the council shall be at the call of the chair or seven members. The council shall adopt a charter that includes, but is not limited to, rules governing the election of a chair and other officers, as well as term lengths.

(4)(a) The Washington state commercial truck safety and education council may:

(i) Recommend programs and projects that carry out the purpose of the council including, but not limited to, enhancing safety and training, providing for research and development, and educating the public;

(ii) Request the authorization of payment of council costs with funds designated for this use under RCW 46.17.315(2);

(iii) Coordinate council activities with industry associations, and others as appropriate, to provide efficient delivery of services for authorized programs and projects and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and activities;

(iv) Recommend procurements for contracts with any public or private partnership, association, corporation, or other legal or commercial entity, to carry out the purpose of the council;

(v) Recommend the commission apply for, receive, and accept grants, loans, advances, and contributions from any source of money, property, labor, or other things of value, to be held, used, and applied for the council's purposes; and

(vi) Recommend grants targeted at improving commercial motor vehicle safety and training.

(b) Commission costs associated with support of the council are to be reimbursed from the commercial truck safety and education account created in RCW 46.68.550.

(5) Beginning December 31, 2027, the council shall annually report its activities, findings, and recommendations during the preceding year to the transportation committees of the legislature by December 31st.

(6) The council may solicit and accept gifts, grants, bequests, devises, or other funds from public and private sources to support its activities.

(7) Members of the Washington state commercial truck safety and education council who are not public employees shall be compensated in accordance with RCW 43.03.220 and shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of the council in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. [2026 c 61 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2026 c 61: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The trucking industry is an essential part of our everyday lives. The trucking industry facilitates essential economic activity, including through the transport of goods for logistics, e-commerce, construction, agriculture, by driving economic growth, creating jobs, and enabling the movement of raw materials and finished products for all sectors. Trucks are vital for businesses to operate efficiently, reach customers, and meet supply chain demands.

(b) In Washington, the trucking industry contributes significantly to state and federal roadway taxes owed by Washington motorists. In 2024, trucks accounted for 8.8 percent of the miles driven upon Washington roadways. The trucking industry accounts for over 170,000 jobs in Washington. Eighty percent of communities in Washington depend exclusively on trucks to move their goods.

(c) Collecting and evaluating data related to commercial vehicle collisions and safety incidents throughout Washington state is vitally important. Over the last 10 years, Washingtonians have seen an uptick in collisions involving large trucks, underscoring the urgent need for targeted strategies to improve roadway safety. According to the Washington traffic safety commission, commercial vehicles were involved in an increasing percentage of fatal and serious injury crashes, with factors such as distracted driving and driver fatigue contributing to these incidents. Through robust safety initiatives and ongoing evaluation, the legislature aims to focus efforts on a reduction in these crash rates and enhancement of the overall safety of Washington's transportation network.

(d) The Washington state trucking industry faces many challenges, including challenges related to workforce development, highway safety, highway planning, and public education. A coordinated and focused mechanism is critical to promote education, training, research, and development for enhanced safety and efficiency within the industry.

Such a system provides for better communication between industry, the public, enforcement agencies, local government, and the legislature, to enhance the safe, efficient delivery of goods and services and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and activities.

(e) Heavy vehicles present unique safety challenges due to their size, weight, maneuverability, and longer stopping distances compared to passenger vehicles. These attributes result in a narrow margin of error for drivers. From 2020 to 2022, 13 percent of fatalities occurred in crashes that involved a heavy vehicle. The behavior of heavy vehicle drivers and other drivers sharing the roadway with them influences the outcome of heavy truck crashes. Other drivers share this responsibility and must be aware of heavy vehicles. A national study of crashes from the 1990s identified drivers of passenger vehicles alone contributed to 70 percent of fatal, two-vehicle crashes that involved a heavy truck.

(f) Increasing education efforts, curriculum, and improved safety and hazard awareness can facilitate greater skill acquisition by heavy vehicle drivers. In addition, analysis supports the importance of focusing on behavior of the drivers of other vehicles. Raising awareness of safe driving practices and consideration for sharing the transportation system with trucks can support shared responsibility among road user modes.

(2) It is the intent of this act to establish the Washington state commercial truck safety and education council, hereinafter referred to as the "council," to recommend programs and projects to advance state interests in roadway safety and improve the safety of the commercial truck industry through cooperative public-private programs that focus on examining crash trends and evidence-based best practices in driver education, improved regulatory compliance, industry training, and educational programs to drive the safe movement of goods on Washington state highways. It is also the intent of the legislature to ensure that adequate funding is provided to implement this act to improve safety and efficiency in the trucking industry." [2026 c 61 s 1.]