

# Know the Top 4 Causes of Truck Fires

An estimated 7,000 truck fires happen on the nation's roadways every year. And while that number may seem small, most tractor trailer fires can create millions of dollars' worth of equipment and cargo losses. They also can cause serious injury or death to drivers and other motorists.

The Technology & Maintenance Council of the American Truckers Association hosted a session about truck fires during its Fall 2018 meeting. They listed these as the four most common causes of truck fires:

- 1. Brakes**
- 2. Wheel bearings**
- 3. Air leaks**
- 4. Tires**

The good news: rigid preventive maintenance can reduce the risk for fire. Conduct pre- and post-trip inspections. Be sure to:

- Check that all components of your truck's braking system work properly
- Make sure your brakes are properly adjusted
- Keep wheel bearings properly lubricated to reduce the risk of a frozen or locked bearing
- Check for blown wheel seals
- Listen for any air leaks
- Maintain proper air pressure in all tires (when tires aren't properly inflated, it increases friction, which raises the risk for fire)
- Make sure dual tires don't touch

If you notice any defects, report them to your supervisor immediately and make sure they get fixed.

These additional steps can help you prevent other types of truck fires:

- Check fluid hoses and wiring insulation for cracks or wear



- Make sure hoses or electrical cables aren't touching
- Keep cargo properly sealed and loaded; ensure proper ventilation in the trailer
- Take special precautions when hauling hazardous materials
- Check the tires, wheels and body of your truck for signs of heat whenever you stop
- Watch your gauges for signs of overheating
- Watch your mirrors for signs of smoke
- Be careful with aftermarket equipment (portable heaters, radios, etc.) that could lead to electrical fires
- Follow proper fueling procedures
- Don't smoke

Also, make sure your truck's fire extinguisher is fully charged, properly secured and operating properly. When using the extinguisher, remember PASS – Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the trigger and Sweep from side to side.

Following these tips can save your life.