

STREET OVERLOAD

TRUCKLOADS OF TROUBLE

By CARL CAMPANILE
Transit Reporter

Big rigs do more than \$1B in damage to city

Vital (& scary) statistics

Summonses for oversized and overweight trucks:

- 1996 — 3,308
- 1997 — 3,720
- 1998 (through October) — 2,656

Truck Inspections:

- 1997 — 4,750, of which 737 (15 percent) resulted in the vehicle being yanked from the road
- 1998 (through October) — 3,451, of which 701 (20 percent) resulted in the vehicle being yanked from the road

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Accidents:

- 3,917 city crashes involved at least one truck over 10,000 pounds in 1996 (most recent figures).
- 27 of these crashes were fatal.
- 2,891 involved injuries

Costs and damage:

- Trucks cause more than \$1 billion in city road damage a year.
- Drivers pay an additional \$382 million a year in repairs because of truck-damaged pavement.
- The heaviest trucks (80,000 pounds) do 10,000 times more damage to a street than does an auto.

Sources: NYPD, Inst. for Traffic Safety, Community Consulting Services

slapped with a \$50 summons for driving off the designated truck route.

In the Hunts Point section of The Bronx, a group called Mothers on the Move petitioned the city Transportation Department earlier this year to stop truckers from driving

down side streets after a 6-year-old girl was mowed down by a tractor-trailer.

And residents in Brooklyn and Queens fear the next fatality will be in one of their neighborhoods because of the oversized trucks that routinely use Linden Boulevard and local side streets as shortcuts to and from the Van Wyck Expressway and JFK Airport.

Car, pedestrian and traffic-safety experts agree that enforcement is woefully inadequate.

"The main reason New York streets look like hot taffy is truck traffic," said John Kaehny, director of Transportation Alternatives, a pro-pedestrian group working to rid streets of big rigs.

The number of trucks on city streets is "appalling," agrees John Cortlett, spokesman for the Automobile Association of New York.

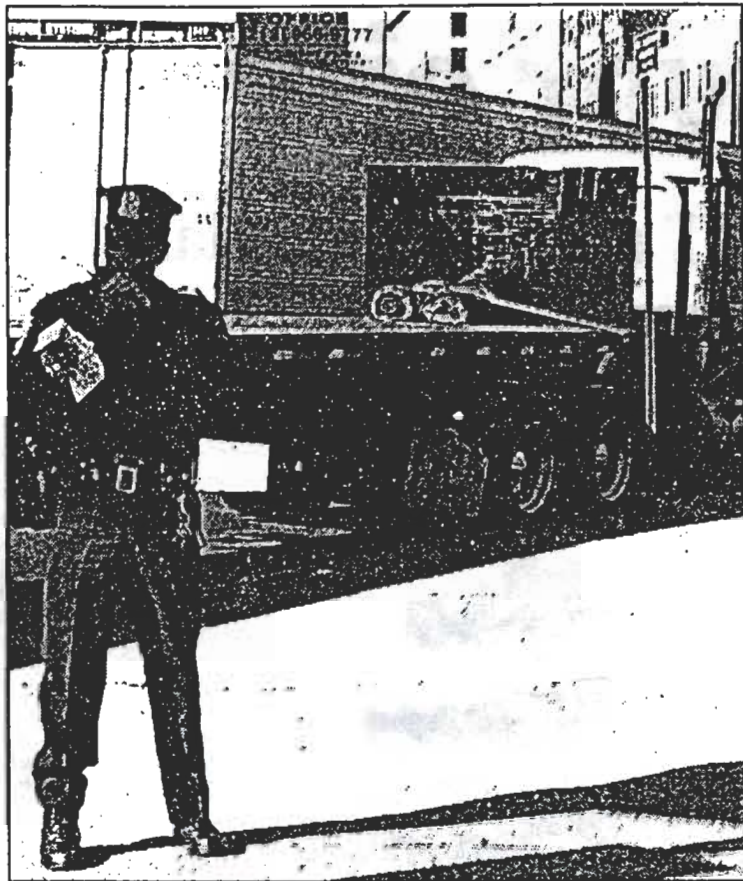
Experts say New York is years behind cities like Tokyo, Paris and London in curbing road-crushing rigs.

"We're the only world-class city that permits heavy trucks to operate within the city limits," said Bob Ketcham, a director of Community Consulting Services.

Paris and Tokyo require haulers to divide their loads among smaller vehicles before entering city streets, he said.

Trucking-industry officials counter that the city's standards are too strict — federal and state rules allow 65-foot rigs.

And Bill Joyce of the New York State Trucking Association says forcing freight businesses to shift loads to smaller trucks would only put more vehicles on city streets.



'LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A BARREL': Officers say it's easy to catch illegal trucks in the city, like this oversized tractor-trailer on Canal Street. N.Y. Post: W.A. Funches Jr.

Route Canal saves semi drivers money

By CARL CAMPANILE

Drivers of gigantic trucks illegally use and abuse city streets to save a few bucks.

Jersey-bound truckers told The Post they travel the two-mile length of Canal Street — from the Manhattan Bridge to the Holland Tunnel — to avoid the stiff one-way toll on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge.

"I use the tunnel because if I take the Verrazano Bridge, I got to pay \$33," said Nelson Perez after he was pulled over and fined by cops on a recent weekday for driving his 60-foot-long rig — five feet over the limit — along Canal.

A driver for Arsenberger Trucking, a waste-hauling firm based in Mill Run, Pa., also was nabbed by Manhattan traffic cops for operating an oversized rig.

"The city makes more garbage than it can handle. When we come to take it away for them, they hammer us," grouched driver Matt Bender, who was stopped by cops at the corner of Canal and Sixth Avenue.

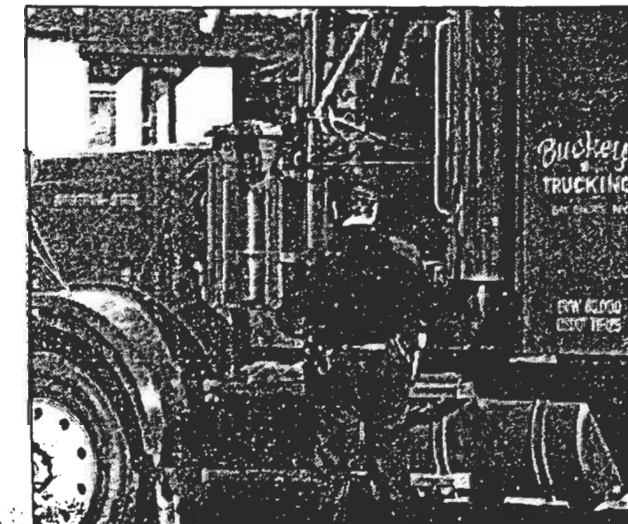
But traffic cop Bob Albertson, who issued the summons, countered: "You're not supposed to be here. You can't cut through Manhattan."

Downtown residents contend that the flow of illegal truck traffic would drop dramatically if the state collected tolls in both directions on the Verrazano. That would mean big rigs would be charged half the current toll each way, which would be less than the \$20 they pay to use the tunnel.

Four Manhattan traffic cops stationed near the tunnel said they issue about 40 tickets a day to oversized trucks on Canal Street. They could issue hundreds more, based on the flow of big rigs observed by a Post reporter.

Oversized trucks rumbled along traffic-choked Canal Street near Mercer Street at a rate of one per minute — or 60 per hour — a midday survey found.

Sometimes, there were four or five oversized flatbed trucks lined up at the intersection.



TAKING A TOLL: A cop stops a rig on Canal Street, where truckers flock to beat high tolls elsewhere. N.Y. Post: W.A. Funches Jr.

Thousands of monstrous, oversized trucks are illegally roaring through the city, ripping up roads, snarling traffic, rattling buildings and endangering New Yorkers, a Post probe has found.

The heavy truck traffic causes more than \$1 billion worth of damage to city streets every year, \$382 million in damage to other vehicles and \$247 million in vibration damage to buildings, a study by the nonprofit traffic-safety group Community Consulting Services found.

During the first nine months of the year, 3.1 million tractor-trailers crossed the Hudson River into the city — 100,000 more than last year over the same period.

Many truck drivers — including major trash haulers — make illegal detours from designated routes to avoid hefty bridge tolls.

Police, who are issuing more and more summonses to drivers of oversized rigs, say trucking violations have gotten out of control.

Catching the offenders "is like shooting fish in a barrel. There's so many of them," said one traffic officer as he ticketed a driver on Canal Street recently.

SoHo photographer Carl Rosenstein said the foundation of his Broome Street art gallery quakes from the vibrations of big rigs zooming by. The pounding has also ruptured underground utilities.

"This area has the most illegal amount of truck traffic in the city," said Rosenstein, a member of the SoHo Alliance neighborhood association.

While he spoke to a Post reporter, a 65-foot-long truck with North Carolina plates made an illegal right turn from Canal onto Broome Street — its driver ignoring a sign barring turns by trucks.

Trucks are barred from city streets if the body and cab together are more than 55 feet long or are carrying more than 73,280 pounds.

Trucks weighing more than 10,000 pounds were involved in 3,917 city crashes and 27 deaths in 1996, the most recent state analysis found.

And size and weight aren't the only problems.

Trucks regularly fail roadside inspections because of serious safety violations ranging from faulty brakes and bald tires to loose cab hook-ups and cracked axles.

One out of every five rigs checked at random by city cops is pulled off the road for safety violations, NYPD statistics show.

Of the 3,451 trucks inspected through October of this year, 701 were yanked from traffic.

Rigs illegally detouring from designated truck routes have also proven to be deadly.

Two weeks ago, an 18-wheeler struck and killed a 7-year-old boy on Greene Avenue in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn. The driver, William Vega, was

Big trucks rock & roll over city

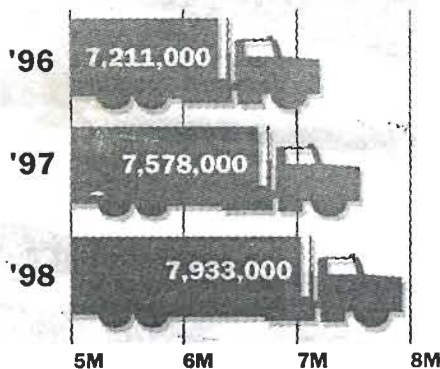
DOT eyeing reroute plan

By JAMES RUTENBERG

Daily News Staff Writer

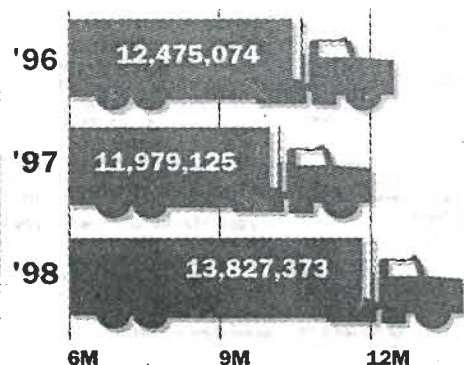
TRUCKS AT PORT AUTHORITY CROSSINGS

New Jersey to New York crossings.
For example: George Washington Bridge, Holland Tunnel.



TRUCKS AT TBTA CROSSINGS

New York to New York crossings.
For example: Battery Tunnel, Throgs Neck Bridge, Midtown Tunnel.



Big, noisy trucks are rumbling through the city in record numbers — choking streets, shaking buildings, rattling nerves and driving residents crazy.

The influx of trucks has gotten so bad that officials have begun planning the first city-wide truck route reorganization in 25 years.

The rerouting plans, which could allow some commercial traffic on city parkways, has become a hot-button political issue.

Community groups from Hunts Point to SoHo have joined to make sure the changes don't invite more trucks onto neighborhood streets.

Records show that last year, 13.8 million trucks used Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority crossings, believed to be the largest number in agency history.

The 1998 totals represent a 15% increase — 1.9 million more trucks — over 1997.

Port Authority figures show more haulers used its facilities — including the Holland and Lincoln tunnels and George Washington Bridge — last year than ever before.

Truck traffic at PA tunnels and bridges has risen 10% over the past two years — 7.9 million in 1998, compared with 7.2 million in 1996.

"It's like living in San Francisco," said SoHo gallery director Carl Rosenstein. "When the trucks pass by, the buildings shake."

Rosenstein's neighborhood is in the path of truckers using the Holland Tunnel.

A member of a group called Trees Not Trucks, Rosenstein said truck traffic is so bad on Broome and Canal Sts. that it caused a water line to burst in a neighboring building.

Alane Sosa is so terrified of truck traffic in her Bronx neighborhood that she doesn't let her two youngest children — ages 7 and 9 — walk the streets alone, especially since a 6-year-old girl was killed last summer by a truck bound for the nearby Hunts Point Market.

"I only let them ride their bikes in a park, where I know a truck can't get in there and hit them," said Sosa, a member of Mothers on the Move, a South Bronx anti-truck group.

She said the worst offenders are truckers who don't stick to designated routes.

Truckers say things aren't much better for them and

complain about increased car traffic.

"It's killing us," said Avi Fishoff, president of Brooklyn-based Prompt Trucking, a paper product hauler. "It takes us at least a half-hour longer to get places."

With residents and truckers screaming for relief, city officials are hiring a consultant to study the truck route structure and propose a plan for all five boroughs.

"We're studying the impact truck traffic has on residential streets and neighborhoods, how to balance the needs of both and how to improve the quality of life," said city Department of Transportation spokesman Mark Patterson.

Among options to be considered in the year-long study:

- Opening truck-free sections of parkways — such as the Belt and Grand Central — to smaller commercial vehicles that now are diverted to local streets.

- Finding ways to persuade truckers to make deliveries in more congested parts of town before or after business hours.
- Developing routes — and a clearer street sign system — to "reflect the needs of freight vehicles."

Community leaders and pedestrian advocates are most worried about new routes.

"A lot of New Yorkers will start seeing more trucks and bigger trucks on streets than they had before when this goes through," predicted John Kaehny, executive director of Transportation Alternatives, a pedestrian lobbying group. "All they're thinking about is what truckers need."

DOT officials say expanding the truck route network would help neighborhoods.

By law, haulers must stay on truck routes whenever possible. When making deliveries, though, they often travel on local streets that are not part of the truck-route network.

Under an expanded routing system, DOT officials said, fewer trucks would feed onto local streets.

Patterson said communities will be consulted before any changes are made. "The primary goal is to minimize the impacts on residential neighborhoods and still be able to maintain deliveries," he said.

City Hall urged to slam brakes on big trucks

By **PETE DONOHUE**

Daily News Staff Writer

Something must be done about the "plague" of 18-wheelers on city streets that is ruining neighborhoods and endangering lives, elected officials, transportation advocates and residents said yesterday.

At a City Hall hearing on a planned Department of Transportation study of citywide truck traffic — the first such study in more than two decades — 15 speakers griped about rigs straying from designated routes, rumbling down residential streets, clogging roadways and creating ear-shattering noise.

Critics suggested various remedies, including increased ticketing, more signs showing where trucks can be driven, even limits on the size of trucks permitted on city streets.

"Trucks are a plague throughout the city," said Councilwoman Kathryn Freed (D-Manhattan).

Many people agreed.

Writer Brad Winters, 32, enjoying lunch on a SoHo park bench, said huge rigs roar past his Charlton St. apartment at all hours.

"You see trucks like you see on interstate highways, just huge trucks, going at incredible speeds," Winters said. "It's very dangerous."

Trucker John Toomey, idling in his rig on Broadway near Canal St., agreed that traffic is a problem but said, "The city will close up if you

don't bring goods in."

The Daily News reported in March that truck traffic has soared in the city. About 13.8 million trucks used Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority crossings last year, believed to be the largest number in agency history.

While the number of pedestrians and bicyclists killed by all types of motor vehicles has dropped dramatically in recent years, trucks continue to pose a great danger, said John Kaehny of Transportation Alternatives, a watchdog group.

From 1994 to 1997, 266 city pedestrians and bikers were killed by trucks, according to DOT figures.

Freed suggested a citywide ban on trucks larger than 33 feet long on residential streets. She also proposed having trailers unload their cargo onto smaller trucks or vans for shipment into the city.

Transportation Commissioner Wilbur Chapman said the year-long study will be used to draft a comprehensive plan to strike "a balance between truck traffic and the tranquility of residential communities."

"There is still more to do, but we've done a massive amount of work in a short amount of time," he said.

Lisa Schreibman of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a watchdog group, said the study, as planned, seems geared more toward helping truckers make their rounds than curbing truck traffic.

SoHo ALLIANCE & TREES NOT TRUCKS

125 GREENE ST.
NY NY 10012

435 BROOME ST.
NY, NY 10013



ILLEGAL TRUCKS USING LOCAL STREETS

Whereas, the Manhattan Neighborhood council has been extremely alarmed and concerned by the ever increasing volume in Manhattan of interstate tractor trailers that exceed NYC allowable lengths of 55' and the failure by government to dedicate adequate enforcement resources to restricting these dangerous vehicles from our streets.

Whereas in 1996, Local Law #6, known as the "Pedestrian Bill of Rights," amended the Administrative Code)Section One, Chapter 1 of Title 19) to include subchapter three, 19-178, which reads, *'The commissioner shall post a sign at each exit within the city of New York of each bridge and tunnel having only one terminus in the city of New York, that states the limits of truck weight and truck length within the city.'*, and

Whereas, curbing the influx of over-sized trucks will have a tremendous impact on limiting the damage these oversized, overweight trucks are doing to the infrastructure of our streets, roadways and bridges in our borough and on all NYC neighborhoods; and

Whereas, NYC is committed to improvements in air quality, particularly in non attainment areas such as Canal Street and its impacted areas("Hot Spots"), and Local Law #6 is in fact an incentive that, if enforced could restrict illegal over sized/length tractor trailers, would reduce the amount of diesel particulate matter(PM 10(2.5)), emitted from these trucks which is an attributing element to the high incidence of asthma and respiratory illnesses in Manhattan.; and

Whereas, Council Member Kathryn Freed introduced Intro 243 on March 18, 1998 to amend the administrative code of the city of New York in relation to prohibiting trucks which are more than 33' in length from SoHo and Little Italy:

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Manhattan Neighborhood council requests that the NYC Dept. of Transportation to supply a list of the number of truck weight and length signs that have been installed and where, as required by law; and

Be It Further Resolved M.N.C. calls on all elected officials and demands that the City of New York supply additional funds needed by the NYPD-Traffic Enforcement Division for scales, state certified measuring devices and police officers to be deployed on a dedicated basis to specifically enforce Local Law #6 throughout Manhattan and particularly at all access points to the borough.;

Be It Further Resolved M.N.C. strongly suggests the NYCDOT to work with the MTA-Bridges & Tunnels and the Port Authority to create weight and measures stations to inspect illegal over weight(more than 73,280 lbs.) and over length tractor trailers, as well as to establish transfer stations outside of Manhattan to help stop the massive infrastructure damages being done to our city streets and bridges; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Manhattan Neighborhood Council desires all Council Members in the borough of Manhattan and other elected officials to support Council Member Freed's Intro 243 and to amend it to include truck restrictions of 33' throughout Manhattan and pressure the City to pass this very important legislation.