

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILIES FOR SAFE STREETS



Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets is the Montgomery County, Maryland, chapter of Families for Safe Streets, which was founded in 2014 by the families of loved ones who were killed or injured in crashes in New York City. Together with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and the Action Committee for Transit, we memorialized two bicyclists killed in Montgomery County in 2022 in side underride crashes:

- On January 14, 2022, bicyclist Zhen Xiu Chen, age 61, was killed by being dragged under a trash truck whose driver was turning right. She had entered the crosswalk at the intersection from the sidewalk. She lived a few blocks away from the intersection where she was killed.



- On August 25, 2022, bicyclist Sarah Langenkamp, 42, was killed by being dragged under a flatbed truck whose driver was turning right into a commercial driveway. She had been riding in the painted bike lane. She was riding back from an event at her sons' school.



RELATED TO THE QUESTIONS IN THE NOTICE:

1. The injury target population should have included everyone at risk from a side underride crash, including non-motorists (pedestrians, bicyclists, and people using other small wheeled things, such as skateboards, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, kick scooters, e-scooters, strollers, etc.). It is also arbitrary. Everybody knows that side underride crashes kill non-motorists, yet in the analysis in the ANPRM, NHTSA analyzed crashes involving light

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passenger vehicles and tractor trailers only. There is no justification in the ANPRM for excluding non-motorists from the analysis. We agree with the comment from the League of American Bicyclists (NHTSA-2023-0012-0112) that by not accounting for the lives of nonmotorized users, NHTSA is dismissing the most vulnerable of all road users and those with the highest likelihood of being killed in crashes with large trucks.

3. The analysis must include crashes at speeds higher than 40 mph because crashes occur at speeds higher than 40 mph, and basic physics says that, the higher the speed, the higher the risk of serious injury or death. For vehicle-vehicle crashes, the analysis must also include oblique-angle crashes; crashes involving more than one truck and one passenger vehicle; and all large trucks, including trash trucks, dump trucks, and flatbed trucks - not just tractor-trailer trucks.
4. NHTSA has not considered the benefits resulting from fewer non-motorists injured or killed. We support the request from the League of American Bicyclists that NHTSA reevaluate the cost-benefit analysis to include fatalities and serious injuries of non-motorists and motorcyclists in its rule making of side underride guards and, as part of this, also revisit the accuracy of Fatality Analysis Reporting System data for crashes involving large truck and non-motorists. In addition, NHTSA should evaluate the potential benefits from aerodynamic fuel savings of side guards used to prevent non-motorist deaths.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

We also support the detailed and extensive comments from Jerry and Marianne Karth (NHTSA-2023-0012-1556).