

## The NTSB on Truck Underride Prevention

The policy position of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on truck trailer “underride” prevention is clear and longstanding: it **strongly supports requiring improved underride protection systems—especially side and rear guards—on truck trailers through federal safety standards.**

### Core NTSB Policy Position

The NTSB has repeatedly recommended that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- **Require side underride guards on trailers**
  - Specifically, the NTSB has called for **mandatory installation of side underride protection systems on newly manufactured trailers (generally >10,000 lbs GVWR)** to reduce deaths and serious injuries.
- **Upgrade rear underride guard standards**
  - The Board has found existing federal rear guard standards to be **outdated and insufficient**, and has urged stronger performance requirements to better prevent passenger vehicles from sliding underneath trailers.
- **Adopt performance-based safety standards**
  - The NTSB emphasizes not just requiring guards, but ensuring they **meet performance criteria capable of preventing underride and mitigating injury severity.**

### Rationale Behind the Policy

The NTSB’s position is grounded in its crash investigations and safety studies, which show:

- Underride crashes are often **catastrophic or fatal** because the passenger compartment is crushed.
- A large share of serious injuries and fatalities in truck side-impact crashes **could be mitigated by effective side guards.**
- Hundreds of deaths annually involve **side or rear underride events** with tractor-trailers.

### Bottom Line

The NTSB’s policy stance is not neutral or incremental—it is **proactive and prescriptive:**

The agency advocates for **federal mandates requiring robust underride protection (side and rear) on truck trailers**, supported by modern, performance-based safety standards, to prevent passenger vehicle fatalities and serious injuries.

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