

# SIDE UNDERRIDE GUARDS

## THE HIDDEN COST OF INACTION



## TRAILER SIDE UNDERRIDE HAZARD

**300**

estimated annual fatalities

**400**

estimated annual serious injuries

**\$7.4B**

estimated annual societal cost

### PEER-REVIEWED FINDING

ALL MODELED SCENARIOS  
PRODUCED POSITIVE NET BENEFITS

**\$137M → \$2.8B**

Present-value net benefits for new U.S. semitrailers.

### LITIGATION REALITY EXAMPLES

**\$81M**

Utah pedestrian side underride verdict

**\$26.1M**

Iowa side underride verdict

Public verdicts likely understate exposure because many lawsuits resolve confidentially.

### ONE VERDICT, THOUSANDS OF TRAILERS PROTECTED

**\$30M verdict ≈ 12,000 trailers equipped with side guards**

### RISK IMPLICATION

Repeated side underride crashes and multimillion-dollar verdicts and settlements increase the legal and financial risk of operating trailers without side underride guards.

After the Supreme Court's broker-liability ruling, preventable trucking safety risks such as side underride reach beyond the motor carrier.

Hein, E. (2026) • *Journal of Progress in Safety & Security* • DOI: [10.59490/jps.2.2026.8512](https://doi.org/10.59490/jps.2.2026.8512)



Underride verdicts