

Record Wrongful Death Trucking Verdict Sends Message to Trucking Companies About Safety

18-wheelers are vital to our economy. We see them on the road every day, and we rely on them for the health of our economy. Our nation's highways and byways connect us with the world and when operated responsibly, big rigs are a huge asset in every aspect of our daily lives. However, a fully loaded [18-wheeler](#) can weigh up to 80 thousand pounds, and when improperly maintained or improperly operated- they can become a dangerous weapon very quickly. Are semi trucks more of a danger than we realize?

[Lawyer Rob Ammons of The Ammons Law Firm](#) recently represented the family of a young woman killed by the driver of one of these trucks. The case involved a rear end collision in which an 18-wheeler driver ran into the back of a young college girl's vehicle. The jury returned a verdict of which according to courthouse sources was the largest verdict for a wrongful death case, a single wrongful death, in McClennan County Texas, which is Waco.

The selection of jury members for a case of this kind was critical. The legal team not only wanted to secure justice for the family of the young woman, but also send a message to other trucking companies looking to cut corners on safety.

Rob Ammons remembers the jury selection process, "What we had was a father who was traumatized and who will be traumatized for the rest of his life because of a death out of order involving a daughter that he dearly loved. And we wanted jurors that could appreciate the depth of that loss and the gravity of the harms that occur to a parent who has lost a child. That's what we were looking for from the jury selection process."

The evidence presented to the jury was critical as well. As Ammons recalls, the case involved a trucking company not fulfilling its obligations to the public's safety. "The case an 18-wheeler company that had failed to monitor, or supervise its drivers. They had information about an 18-wheeler driver that indicated he was violating certain safety rules. And that those violations were known by the company. They actually sent him some correspondence about some of them but they did nothing to prevent him from driving, or to prevent others from being exposed to the hazard he presented."

Driver fatigue emerged as the overwhelming reason for the accident and Ammons believes trucking company pressure on truck drivers to get their load to the destination faster, puts others on the road at great risk for [trucking accidents](#).

"Fatigue can cause one to fail to have proper reaction time. In this case that was certainly an issue," says Ammons. "There were vehicles stopped in front of this 18 wheeler, which anyone had they been paying attention could have seen. Apparently he did not see those vehicles, did not apply the brakes, did not take proper precautions and as a result killed a young lady."

Ammons says he hopes this case will serve as a wakeup call for all trucking company owners that it is more expensive to ignore safety procedures designed to protect other drivers than to follow them.

Rob Ammons is Board Certified in Personal Injury Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, in addition to being Board Certified in Civil Law by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. Rob Ammons' law practice, [The Ammons Law Firm](#), is located in Houston, Texas. The Ammons Law Firm practice is exclusively personal injury law, handling such cases as: tire defects, oil rig explosions, truck accidents, plant explosions, refinery accidents, wrongful death, post-collision fires, seat belt defects, airbag defects, SUV rollovers and workplace negligence.