

4 September 2024

Queensland experiencing a truckload of bridge strikes

- The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has launched a new campaign aimed at tackling the large number of road and rail bridge strikes across Queensland - averaging more than one a day.
- The campaign is a joint initiative between TMR, Queensland Rail and the Queensland Trucking Association.
- Drivers are reminded to know their height and plan their journey.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has launched a new campaign aimed at tackling the alarming number of road and rail bridge strikes across Queensland.

The “Truckload of trouble” campaign is aimed at increasing driver awareness around the consequences of bridge strikes to themselves and others, encouraging drivers to know their load and vehicle height and provide practical solutions to plan their route and avoid low clearance bridges.

There has been a consistently high rate of bridge strikes over the last two years, with an average of one bridge strike per day. In the 2023/24 financial year, there were 369 rail bridge or protection beam strikes recorded with 360 the year before.

In 2023 alone, bridge strikes caused over 200 hours of rail delays.

The campaign is a joint initiative between TMR, Queensland Rail and the Queensland Trucking Association in a fresh plea for drivers to know their height and plan their journey.

The most frequently struck bridges in the 2023/24 financial year are:

- Logan Road, Buranda
- North Street, Willowburn
- Bergin Street, Booval
- Oxley Road, Corinda
- William Berry Drive / Visentin Road connection, Morayfield

Low clearance bridges are fitted with signage and many feature measures ranging from protection beams to height chimes.

Apart from causing serious risk to road users and delaying passenger trains, motorists who damage rail infrastructure can be fined from \$1,290 and four demerit points, to a \$12,904 penalty if the matter goes to court. Queensland Rail actively pursues motorists for the cost of repairs which would otherwise be borne by taxpayers.



A driver who damages a bridge, tunnel or overhead structure may also be liable for other penalties such as contravening clearance signs (\$645 fine and 4 demerit points) or \$6452 if the matter goes to court, along with careless driving of a motor vehicle (\$645 and 3 demerit points).

In the instance of a road bridge strike, it should be immediately reported to 13 90 40. For a rail bridge strike, it should be reported to Queensland Rail using the telephone number on the identification plate fixed to the bridge or by calling Emergency Network Control on 1800 079 303.

Quotes attributable to the Transport and Main Roads General Manager Land Transport Safety and Regulation Joanna Robinson:

“The vision is shocking, we see over-height vehicles not only damaging infrastructure but losing their loads, becoming projectiles at risk of hitting other road users.

“Bridge strikes are dangerous. They're dangerous for the driver of the over-height vehicle, they're dangerous for train drivers and the passengers and they're dangerous for other road users.

“Falling debris from the bridge can damage other people's cars, or in worst case scenarios, serious injury, cause a road crash or kill someone.

“They also cause hundreds of hours of delays every year not only to the vehicle involved, but to rail customers, other road users and other truckdrivers.

“What that really looks like is - a parent being late to their child's concert or school pick-up, someone missing an important doctor's appointment, other truck drivers having to find alternate routes due to detours meaning new permit applications, petrol costs and more.”

“Don't take the risk, obey the signs. A bridge strike will cost a truck load.”

Quotes attributable to Queensland Rail Acting Head of SEQ Rob Hill

“When there's a bridge strike, rail traffic is halted, and our teams carefully inspect it to ensure it's safe for trains to operate.

“Bridge strikes are extremely disruptive. Recently we had a strike at Allan Terrace Corinda, which resulted in 103 train delays and 35 train cancellations.

“We're pleading with drivers of large vehicles, like trucks, caravans or loaded trailers, to plan their route, obey the road signs and signals and know their height.

“Every strike has the potential to cause harm to drivers and the public. They are completely avoidable if drivers pay attention and plan their route.”

Quotes attributable to Queensland Trucking Association CEO Gary Mahon

“The ‘Truckload of Trouble’ campaign messaging is critical for all truck drivers delivering in SEQ, bridge strikes are avoidable.

“Trucking companies, truck rental companies and businesses using trucks to deliver in and around the city have a responsibility to educate drivers.

“Awareness about truck and bridge heights should be included in pre-start check lists, toolbox talks and trip planning. Truck drivers who are newly licenced, new to driving around the city or hiring a truck, must be provided with information on bridge and truck heights to avoid these preventable incidents.

“For professional truck drivers, a bridge strike on your record is a black mark against you for future job opportunities. And there’s also embarrassment in having to tell your boss.”

Explainer/fast fact and or further information (when required/relevant):

Fast facts or web links to project page or available images.

ENDS

Media contact – TMR Media Team: (07) 3066 7060