

When a Truck Hits a Car

Why collisions with 18-wheelers injure and kill at speeds cars survive

01 The weight mismatch

Passenger car

 ~4,000 lb

Loaded tractor trailer

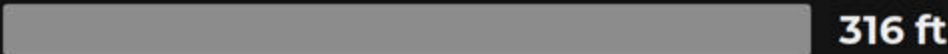


80,000 lb — about 20x the mass

In a collision, the lighter vehicle absorbs nearly all of the speed change.

02 Stopping from 65 mph, dry road

Passenger car



Loaded semi



Nearly two football fields, including driver reaction — roughly two thirds more than a car (FMCSA).

03 Who dies in truck-vs-car crashes

97%

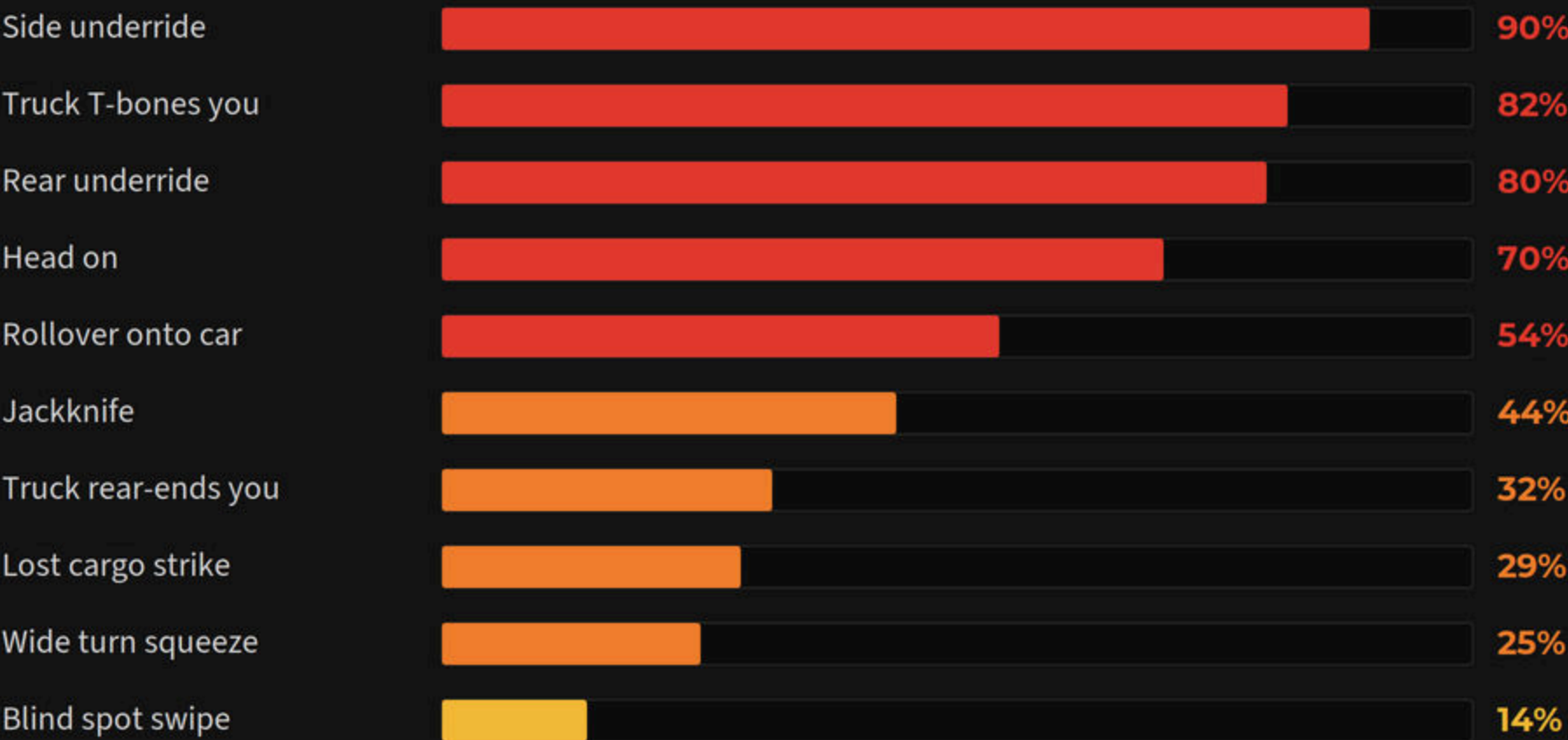
of vehicle occupants killed in two-vehicle crashes between a large truck and a passenger vehicle were in the passenger vehicle (IIHS, 2023)

04 Underride occurred in about half of fatal truck-car crashes

57% involved the front of the truck · 22% the rear · 20% the side (IIHS)

Side underride guards are still not required in the United States.

05 Modeled risk of fatal injury at 40 mph, by crash type



Modeled educational estimates for a typical adult in the passenger vehicle; not predictions for any crash or person.

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