

# Kerri Wirachowsky

## Enforcement Program Advisor

If you have an inspection conducted in southwestern Ontario, you might be surprised to see an attractive blond woman checking the wheels and brakes of your trailer. Rest assured that she knows what she's doing, as Kerri Wirachowsky knows more about brakes than you will probably ever learn.

Kerri has spent the last two decades around commercial motor vehicles in her effort to make the highways safer for all of us. In 1990 she was trained as a Level I Inspector after completing the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) course. She quickly moved to the role of instructor in 1996 and advanced to lead instructor in 1999. In 2001 Kerri was certified as a National CVSA Instructor Developer and was then appointed to the Education Quality Assurance Team for training in Canada.

That same year, Kerri earned the Grand Champion Award in CVSA's North American Inspectors Competition. Although she competed and has worked with mostly men, she has proven herself more accomplished than many of her peers, regardless of their gender. Kerri is the only female to ever win the Inspector's Competition since its inception in 1994.

Her career aspirations continued, and in 2009 Kerri applied for, and received the position of Enforcement Program Advisor with the Carrier Safety Program Office in

St. Catherines, Ontario, which is the role she holds today. Although she might not have the opportunity to inspect as many trucks, she still gets out to check an air brake or two on occasion.



*Kerri Wirachowsky,*

“When I initially started in 1990 there were only a few female inspectors,” Kerri admits. “That is not the case anymore. There are a significant number of female inspectors in Ontario and throughout the rest of the continent [now].” She admits that like driving a truck, inspecting them is still a male dominated environment.

Kerri said the fact that so few women were inspectors when she began her career only “drove you more to succeed.” She admonishes women to, “be the best at your job no matter who you are or what your job is. You have to learn to be ‘one of the guys’ so to speak,” when working in a predominantly male environment. She often instructs female inspector recruits to find their niche and their comfort level and to know their job well, “probably better than their male counterparts,” and they’ll earn the respect they deserve.

In order to become a CVSA Level I inspector, the trainee undergoes nine weeks of basic training to understand hours of service, weights and dimensions, driver qualifications, trip inspection, vehicle maintenance, dangerous goods, court procedures,

evidence taking, and commercial motor vehicle pullover training. CVSA inspectors are also trained in self-defense and tactical communications.

Kerri's passion for sharing her expertise is evident and in 2003 she was appointed as co-chair of CVSA's North American Inspector's Championship Organizing Committee and in 2007 was appointed as the chair person of the CVSA Vehicle Committee. She also assisted in organizing the Annual CVSA Conference held in Ontario in 2003 and 2006.

One of the challenges Kerri faced when serving on the Vehicle Committee was to better understand and minimize inconsistencies in the inspection of air disc brakes. Since the inspection process was different than the standard push rod brake design,

Kerri arranged field tests with brake manufacturers, engineers, and enforcement personnel to ensure the decisions made would be fair to all and would reduce inconsistencies in enforcement procedures.

Proving her ability to succeed in a male dominated environment, Kerri is an accomplished and recognized leader in North America and has earned the respect from her peers. Steve Keppler, CVSA Executive Director said, "Kerri is a key figure in our organization and has - and is - making a big impact in our industry."

Kerri Wirachowsky is a role model for every one of us in the trucking industry, whether you're job finds you under the truck, behind the wheel or in the corporate office, she's a notable woman in trucking.

