CASE SUMMARIES

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Texas / Eastern District
Court denies dismissal and summary judgment in tire-failure trucking case, finding fact issues on inspection and maintenance.

Abedian v. Mueller, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32674 (E.D. Tex. Feb. 18, 2026)
The Court denied both a motion to dismiss and a motion for summary judgment filed by a commercial driver and motor carrier in a negligence action arising from a tire-tread separation that struck the plaintiff's vehicle. The Court held the complaint plausibly alleged negligence and negligence per se based on failures to inspect, maintain, and safely operate the tractor-trailer. It further found genuine disputes of material fact regarding whether the driver and carrier breached duties under Texas law and the FMCSRs, citing evidence including maintenance records, deposition testimony, crash reports, and photographs of the tire. The Court also granted plaintiff's motion to quash a second deposition, finding defendants' unilateral scheduling imposed an undue burden.

Arkansas / Eastern District
Court allows direct negligence claim to proceed despite agency admission but dismisses punitive damages in cattle-transport accident.

Stallworth v. Flatfoot Trucking, LLC, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32452 (E.D. Ark. Feb. 18, 2026)
The Court granted in part and denied in part defendants' motion for partial summary judgment arising from a highway collision caused when cattle escaped from a burning tractor-trailer and entered Interstate 40. Although Flatfoot admitted the driver was acting within the scope of employment, the Court held plaintiffs could pursue direct negligence claims based on evidence suggesting possible failures in inspection and maintenance, including testimony that a brake or bearing failure caused the trailer fire. The Court rejected plaintiffs' reliance on alleged hiring and drug-testing deficiencies as unrelated to the accident and therefore insufficient to bypass the Elrod doctrine. Punitive damages were dismissed, as the record contained no clear and convincing evidence of reckless or malicious conduct.

Ohio / Southern District
Court dismisses negligent hiring and entrustment claims against logistics company but allows negligent training claim to proceed.

Vaughn v. Roadtex Transp. Corp., 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32812 (S.D. Ohio Feb. 17, 2026)
The Court granted in part a motion for judgment on the pleadings filed by Stevo Logistics following a rear-end collision involving a semi-truck with alleged brake problems. The Court dismissed claims for negligent entrustment, hiring, retention, supervision, and negligence per se, finding plaintiffs failed to plead facts showing the driver was incompetent or that Stevo knew of any disqualifying history. Allegations that the company failed to conduct a background check or discover unspecified criminal convictions were insufficient under Ohio law. However, the Court allowed a negligent training claim to proceed based on allegations that Stevo directed the driver to continue operating the truck despite known brake issues. Plaintiffs' motion to amend was denied as futile.