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Trucks have hit this low bridge more than 100 times, and officials still haven't fixed it

By Timothy B. Lee | tim@vox.com | Jan 6, 2016, 2:10pm EST

The federal government **recommends** that bridges on public roads have a clearance of at least 14 feet. This ensures that trucks shorter than the **maximum truck height** — 13 feet, 6 inches in most states — can pass underneath them safely. But a railroad

bridge in Durham, North Carolina, provides a clearance of just 11 feet, 8 inches — more than 2 feet shorter than federal recommendations. As a result, trucks regularly hit the bridge, producing some dramatic — though thankfully nonfatal — crashes.

Jürgen Henn has worked across the street from the bridge for years, and in 2008 he set up cameras to capture these crashes on video, posting them on YouTube and his website **11foot8.com**. He recently earned a **write-up from the Wall Street Journal** after capturing his 100th crash.

Local officials have tried a variety of things to alert truck drivers to the danger. There are warning signs as well as a height sensor that detects too-tall trucks and triggers flashing lights. But these measures obviously haven't been enough to get all drivers' attention. In recent years, about one truck a month has hit the bridge.

But now that national media organizations have started covering the story, officials seem to feel a greater sense of urgency. According to the Journal, "Durham officials on Monday began building a system hooking the height sensor to a traffic light before the bridge that will turn red when it picks up a too-high truck. The light will turn green eventually, but they hope it is red for long enough that drivers realize they should turn."

It remains to be seen if this will work. If it doesn't, we'll all be able to watch the results at 11foot8.com.

Here are some of the most dramatic crashes Henn has captured:

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