

# TRUCK OPERATORS AND DRIVERS

## SAFETY TALK

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### GENERAL DRIVING RULES

1. Don't operate a vehicle if you are fatigued or ill, or if you are taking medication whose container label indicates that the medication may cause drowsiness or other negative side effects.
2. Don't drive under an overhang unless you know the clearance.
3. Don't jump down from your vehicle. Always maintain three points of contact (two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand).
4. Don't sit on your wallet when driving, which can eventually result in back pain.
5. Always scan your mirrors and gauges. Watch for pedestrians, animals, and road signs.
6. Look at the vehicle ahead of you as well as what's ahead of it.
7. Never assume another vehicle that has its turn signal on will turn in that direction.
8. Check your rearview mirror and blind spots before changing lanes.
9. Keep your ears open for sirens, horns, screeching brakes, or other noises around you.
10. Be aware of right-of-way laws for the state you're driving in. Remember that you never have the right of way until the other driver gives it to you.
11. When making left turns, give oncoming traffic the right of way. Inch out into the intersection and keep your wheels pointed straight ahead, then turn when it is safe to do so.
12. Speed limits are for ideal conditions. Reduce your speed based on visibility, traffic, weather, and road conditions. It is against the law to exceed the speed limit, even to pass.
13. Signal with your blinkers 100 feet before you make a turn or change lanes.
14. Keep a safe distance behind the vehicle ahead of you. Use this simple method of counting to check yourself: Pick a fixed point for the vehicle ahead of you to pass by. As soon as the vehicle passes the designated point, start counting by saying, "One thousand one, one thousand two," etc.
  - Small trucks should be 3 seconds behind the vehicle ahead.
  - Heavy vehicle should be 4 seconds behind the vehicle ahead.
  - Remember that these distances are for ideal conditions. Bad weather demands even greater caution.
15. Always use your safety belt.
16. Never drink or use drugs and drive. Besides being a safety risk, it can be grounds for dismissal.
17. When driving a heavy-duty truck, signal your turns early, leave plenty of space, and always watch vehicles entering and leaving your blind spots.
18. Watch for sudden stops and starts when near passenger buses.
19. Always yield the right of way to an emergency vehicle. Pull to the right and let it pass. If you can't pull to the right, stay put and let it go around you.
20. Watch out for motorcycles. Give them plenty of room on the road.
21. Don't try to start from a stopped position too fast. Accelerate smoothly and consistently.

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22. Don't ride the clutch. When stopped, place the truck in neutral and use the foot brake.
23. If stuck in sand, mud, snow, etc., don't keep churning the wheels. Stop before you break an axle. Use boards under your wheels or call for help.
24. When using the horn to signal to someone you are there, a friendly "toot-toot" is much better than a panic producing blast.
25. Don't go through changing traffic lights just before they change. Control your speed and be able to stop when the light changes to yellow.
26. Always turn from the lane nearest the direction you will turn. The far left lane to turn left and the far right lane to turn right. Be especially careful if you have to swing out into the next lane to make the turn.
27. If stopped on a hill, remember the danger of using air brakes for parking. If the truck loses air pressure, it can roll into other vehicles, even if it is in gear.
28. If your truck runs off the road onto soft shoulders, slow down to about 10 miles per hour before trying to get back on the pavement.
29. When stopping in traffic behind another vehicle, keep the vehicle's back wheels in your sight. This keeps distance between you and them and if you are rear-ended, it can keep you from being pushed into the vehicle in front of you.
30. Never stop on train tracks or try to go around barriers.

## WEATHER AND SPECIAL DRIVING CONDITIONS

1. When driving at night, don't drive so fast that you see things too late to react to them. Drive so you can react to what you can see in your headlight range.
2. Keep your windows clean so that you can see clearly.
3. When driving during rush hours, be alert. Others may not be paying attention. Drive with the flow of traffic.
4. When driving on hills or curving roads, where it's difficult to see oncoming traffic, be extra cautious. Pass only when you can see clearly and there is a dashed line on your side of the road.
5. Wear sunglasses on bright sunny days so that the glare does not block your vision.
6. Keep your sun visor pointed down when the sun is bright and point it away from your face.
7. Whenever there are construction signs, slow down and watch for workers, detours, sloped shoulders, and slow traffic.
8. Turn on your wipers, defroster, and lights in rain or fog.
9. Use the low beams for fog to avoid too much glare.
10. Reduce speed in rain or fog so you can see far enough ahead to respond to problems.
11. If fog is too heavy or the weather is very bad, pull over and stop if necessary.
12. Check your tires for wear when wet weather season is coming. Worn or underinflated tires can hydroplane on wet surfaces. If you hydroplane, don't hit your brakes. Ease off the accelerator and ride it out.
13. Reduce your speed when driving in snow or ice. Traction can vary. Be especially careful on bridges.

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14. Use snow tires or chains where needed.
15. Wet roads are slippery. Control the skid by steering the vehicle in the direction you want to go (don't oversteer) and stay off the brake and gas pedal.
16. Be especially cautious on paydays, Fridays after lunch, and late Saturday night due to people drinking.

## SAFELY PULLING FROM CURBS

1. Look to front and rear for approaching traffic immediately before pulling out.
2. Signal before pulling from the curb.
3. Don't pull out into the path of oncoming vehicles, causing them to change speed or direction.
4. Continuously observe traffic while pulling out.
5. Always check clearances from other parked vehicles before pulling out.

## BACKING UP

1. Don't back up unless necessary.
2. Avoid driving into a narrow street, dead-end alley, or driveway, which will require backing to get out.
3. Look all around your vehicle before getting in. Back immediately after completing your circle check.
4. Don't back if your vision is obstructed; get out and check the situation thoroughly first.
5. When backing from sunlight into the shadow of a dock, stop for a few minutes and allow your eyes to adjust to the change in light.
6. Back up slowly.
7. Don't back into moving traffic.

## AVOID SKIDDING

1. Never drive too fast for road and weather conditions.
2. Always keep safe following distances using the 3 to 4 second rule.
3. Anticipate water on and under bridges, in gutters, ruts, and near curbs.
4. React calmly but quickly to an initial skid. Control the skid by steering the vehicle in the direction you want to go (don't oversteer) and stay off the brake and gas pedal.
5. Observe precautionary speed postings.
6. Slow down when approaching a curve.

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### PASSING SAFETY

1. Have enough clear space to pass safely.
2. Move fast enough when starting to pass to return to your lane in a safe amount of time.
3. Don't violate a no passing left lane marking.
4. Don't pull back into the lane too soon — be clear of the vehicle passed.
5. Avoid passing on slippery road surfaces.
6. Don't pass on the right.
7. Avoid passing more than one car at a time.
8. Don't pass on a curve.
9. If being passed, slow somewhat to allow the vehicle passing to return to the lane safely.

### AVOIDING HEAD-ON COLLISIONS

1. Begin evasive action immediately if a driver crosses the center of the road.
2. Blow horn if necessary.
3. Slow down quickly and drive to extreme right side of road and stop if necessary to avoid the collision.

### AVOIDING ACCIDENTS WHEN PARKED

1. Don't park on the wrong side of the road.
2. Avoid parking too close to an intersection.
3. Don't unnecessarily park on traveled portion of highway, curve, or hill.
4. Warn traffic of an emergency stop with a flag, flare, or flasher lights.
5. Park as close to curb as possible.
6. Turn wheels toward curb and set emergency brake.

### PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

1. Anticipate pedestrians stepping in front of your vehicle when driving through congested areas.
2. Keep adequate clearance between your vehicle and parked cars.
3. Don't pass a vehicle that has stopped to allow a pedestrian to cross.
4. Check location of pedestrians before starting on green signal or riding through a yellow light.
5. Be aware of activities of pedestrians on edge of road or sidewalk.
6. Give pedestrians the right-of-way.
7. Sound horn to alert pedestrians of your vehicle's approach.
8. Don't pass a stopped school bus.
9. Avoid simply driving through or turning at an intersection when glare from the sun blinds you.

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### LOADING AND UNLOADING CHECKLIST

1. Don't unload your truck without first setting the hand brake and chocking the rear wheels.
2. Never attempt to open rear or side doors of a trailer before first tapping the doors with tightly closed fist. A change from a hollow to a muffled sound could indicate that your load has shifted.
3. Never stand directly in front of a swing door when opening, always stand to the side. Always lock doors firmly in place to prevent them from swinging.
4. Always release load bars or other product restraining devices slowly.
5. Place heavier loads on the floor of the vehicle and not on shelves.
6. Don't try to stop falling products unless you can do so safely.
7. Tighten your stomach muscles and use both hands when closing trailer roll up doors.
8. Secure your hand cart inside or on vehicle before driving.
9. After hitching your trailer, always examine fifth-wheel lockpin to make sure that it is locked in place. Test the security of the lockpin by driving the trailer forward slowly.

### FUELING

1. Turn the vehicle off before refueling.
2. Don't smoke while refueling a vehicle.
3. If you spill fuel on your hands, wash with soap and water.
4. Clean up small spills from around fuel tanks with paper towels or rags before climbing onto tank.
5. If a large spill occurs, don't walk through it; follow your company's reporting and cleanup procedure.
6. Always stay in attendance when truck is being refueled.

### ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

1. Check for injuries. Move out of traffic. Administer first aid if you're qualified. Call 9-1-1 if necessary.
2. Block the scene by warning passing vehicles of the accident with triangles, flares, etc.
3. Stay near your vehicle.
4. Exchange information with the other driver(s): name, insurance company, and driver's license number.
5. Don't admit guilt to anyone, no matter who is at fault. Get the name of a witness if you can.
6. Notify your dispatcher or supervisor at once.

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