

Trucking Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Trucking and truck drivers are the literal driving force in our commercial manufacturing and industrial world. Witness the effects supply line problems and lack of drivers which has caused unprecedented inflationary woes.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

TRUCK DRIVING CAN BE DANGEROUS

- The truck driver is the most important link in trucking safety. Stay healthy, fit, and well rested. Driver fatigue and inattention to the road can increase the probability of an accident. To maintain your most alert state when driving, avoid alcohol, drugs, and medications that cause drowsiness. Learn and follow the hours-of-service requirements that apply to you. Don't multi-task while driving—keep your eyes and mind on the road.
- Every time a truck driver gets behind the wheel, he or she is at risk. In fact, of the top 25 deadliest occupations in America, truck driving ranks seventh on the list. Truck drivers also face the highest number of fatalities of any job, at a rate of 918 fatalities each year.¹
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor, the most common cause of workplace death is transportation accidents, which account for 40% of all on-the-job deaths; and delivery truck drivers experience nearly three times more injuries and deaths than any other occupation.² And this number is only going up each passing year. The U.S. Department of Labor points out that the number of truck drivers who were killed on the job rose 6.6% from 2016 to 2018.
- The growing competition in the online retail industry, has also made a big impact on the day-to-day lives of truck drivers. With the "Amazon effect", consumers are led to

believe that one-day turnaround for their online deliveries is a norm. With increasing number of packages flooding the supply chain and the frequency of deliveries being made, truckers are performing under pressure.

MOST SAFETY RISKS ARE ON THE ROAD

Wear a seatbelt: Though decades of research continue to show that seatbelts save lives, a stunning one in six truck drivers doesn't regularly wear one. Regular seatbelt use is one of the easiest ways to improve your safety.

Check blind spots: Trucks have blind spots. Know where they are and clear before changing lanes. Full seconds before changing lanes and take seven seconds to complete the change.

Monitor speed limits. Speed limits often change with little warning, and the faster you are going the more difficult it will be to stop in an emergency.

Lower speed on curves. Even the posted speed limit can be unsafe when navigating a big truck with its high center of gravity on a curve. Slow to at least 5 mph below the speed limit or even lower on steep curves.

Avoid cell phone use while driving. You're not allowed to reach for your phone in a way that takes you out of a normal driving position, to push more than a single button, or to hold your phone in your hand.

Follow the seven-second rule. Trucks are far bigger and heavier, with a much greater stopping distance. Increase this to seven seconds of distance on clear, dry roads.

Avoid drugs and alcohol. Driving under the influence is illegal and dangerous. Commercial drivers may not have any measurable alcohol in their bloodstream or consume any alcohol within four hours before taking control of their vehicle.

Stay cool, calm, and collected. If someone angers you on the road, take a deep breath and slow down (but don't slam on the brakes).

Allow that person the needed space to get away from you and give yourself time to calm down.

Always use signals. When you're driving a large vehicle that is difficult for other drivers to see and maneuver around, it's essential to signal your intentions for a few seconds before making a turn or a lane change.

Take regular rest breaks. Hours of service regulations govern how long you can drive at a time and how much rest is required before you drive again.

Inspect your truck. At the end of each day or trip, don't forget the post-trip inspection. You're required to inspect everything from the tires to the windshield wipers and complete a written report within 24 hours.

THE SAFETY TRIFECTA: PRE – TRIP, ON THE ROAD, POST – TRIP

Pre – Trip: Pre – Planning is The Key for Trip Safety

Plan your route. Whether you're driving a single load from Point A to Point B or dropping off smaller loads along the way, it's essential to plan your route.

Develop a preventative maintenance plan. If you're an owner-operator, you will be responsible for designing your own preventative maintenance plan. If you drive for a company, your carrier should develop the schedule. This plan should be based on things like mileage, days on the road, and any previous history of breakdowns.

Perform a pre-trip inspection. The more thorough you are in checking everything from the lights to the brakes to the coupling system, the safer you will be on the road. Be sure to carry an emergency kit with the tools and spare parts you need to perform minor repairs during your trip.

Check weather and traffic reports. Before you set out, look at the latest weather and traffic reports.

Follow safe loading procedures. In general, be sure to apply the

tractor and trailer parking brakes, ensure that all items are properly strapped down, follow all instructions the shipper gives you, and double-check that you have a clear path, and the dock plate is removed before pulling out.

SAFETY DRIVING TIPS FOR TRUCK DRIVING IN WINTER WEATHER

Treat your diesel. Diesel fuel does start to gel at temperatures right around the freezing point of water (32F), and it can become completely unusable at about 17F. Even partially gelled diesel is hard on your engine.

Check brake lights. Make sure your brake lights are working and keep a close eye on those ahead of you. Slow down and double your following distance.

Carry emergency supplies. Carry tire chains, a charged cell phone, and an emergency kit. Make sure you have nonperishable food and a few blankets in case you get stuck on the road.

Watch for black ice. Black ice is a thin layer of ice that forms right around the freezing point, especially on bridges and overpasses. It is nearly impossible to see and can quickly send you into a skid.

Pay attention to tire spray. If the road conditions look wet, check the tires of the vehicles around you. If they're spraying a lot of water, odds are good that the road is just wet and not yet frozen.

Practice defensive driving. Assume the drivers around you have little experience in winter weather. Drive defensively, ready to evade potentially dangerous situations. Stay cautious and alert.

FINAL WORD

You learn a lot of truck driver safety tips while you were going through training. It's only natural to forget some of your training once you get on the road. Safety is important on your 1,000th trip as on your first, so refresher courses for truck drivers are necessary.