

# EASY WAYS TO STAY SAFE



According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's Highway Loss Data Institute, a total of 4,014 people died in large truck crashes in 2020. Fifteen percent of these deaths were truck occupants, 68 percent were occupants of cars and other passenger vehicles, and 16 percent were pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists.

To avoid being part of those sobering statistics, make safe driving techniques the foundation of how you (and your drivers) operate. The following simple tips will keep you, your drivers, your truck, and others safe.

## 1 REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

It's illegal to talk on a handheld phone or text while operating a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce. Put your phone away and disable notifications from apps that aren't necessary to your job. Reading a map on your phone, talking on a CB, listening to music, daydreaming, or picking something up from the floor are all distractions that could potentially lead to an accident. Stay as focused on the road as you can.

## 2 KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Don't overestimate your driving ability. Substandard weather conditions and dealing with fatigue are always unique situations; it doesn't matter how often you've dealt with something similar before. And remember that the only true cure for fatigue is sleep, not energy drinks or caffeine!

## 3 STAY IN YOUR LANE

If you hit a road hazard or start having mechanical problems, try to stay in your lane of travel instead of jerking suddenly to the left or right. You'll likely do less harm to yourself and others by avoiding sudden lane changes or swerves. Some reasons for leaving your lane suddenly may not be under your control, such as another driver cutting you off. However, try your best to remain in your lane immediately following an incident and then make your way to the shoulder or the nearest exit carefully and thoughtfully.

## 4 WATCH FOR OTHERS ON THE ROAD

Many motorists drive in unpredictable ways, especially when near semi-trucks. Poor driving usually indicates ignorance of your vehicle's limitations or their own impatience. Use extra care when surrounded by motorists on crowded highways or interstates.



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## 5 UNDERSTAND SPECIAL LOADS

Hauling certain types of loads require special training to operate safely, such as tankers with flammable or toxic liquids. In certain circumstances, these liquids can push the vehicle in unexpected directions when it needs to be stable and predictable. Certain flatbed cargo can also become dislodged or—in a sudden stop—come loose and be projected toward the driver or others.

## 6 LOGS

Always keep accurate logs and insist that your drivers do too. The hours-of-service regulations set forth by the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) (FMCSA) are there to keep you and other motorists safe. Driving while tired can be incredibly dangerous, especially when behind the wheel of a big rig.

## 7 PARKING & BACKING UP

Parking your rig or backing it up is when most minor accidents occur. Although it may sound silly, damage from backing into a building, post, car, or other object can potentially cost a lot of money in repairs. Never start backing up before walking to the rear of your trailer and looking around for any obstructions. And never rely on spotters, especially at truck stops. While good-intentioned, spotters don't have to deal with the damage if you hit something because of their bad instructions.

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