

# SMART DRIVER<sup>®</sup>

December 2023

## MANAGING SPACE AROUND YOUR TRUCK

Managing the space around the truck is challenging. From driving in congested traffic to navigating a crowded parking lot, truck drivers must constantly track the hazards around them to prevent a collision. Read the information below and ask yourself how you can improve your driving style in any of the hazard categories.



## RECOGNIZE THE HAZARDS

### ENVIRONMENT

Ice, mud, dirt, frost, and water can obstruct mirrors and windows, making it difficult to track the location of other vehicles. Road vibration can also knock mirrors out of alignment.

### EQUIPMENT

A truck's blind spots are directly in front of the tractor, the tractor's right-front passenger side (which is the most dangerous), both sides of the trailer from front to rear, and directly behind the trailer. Missing, damaged, or misaligned mirrors hinder the driver's ability to monitor vehicles around the truck, while an inoperable turn signal prevents warning other drivers of an impending lane change.

### PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS

Unsafe driver behaviors: Not checking mirrors regularly for vehicles and objects around the truck, tailgating, making abrupt lane changes, and relying solely on mirrors and blind-spot warning systems.

Unsafe non-driving behaviors: Failing to conduct a proper pre-trip inspection, failing to use spotters or check behind the truck before backing, failing to keep windows and mirrors clean and adjusted properly.

## KNOW THE DEFENSE

### REACT PROPERLY TO HAZARDS

To avoid hazards around the truck, try the "lean and look" method to verify a vehicle is not hidden in the tractor's right front blind spot. Also, avoid frequent or abrupt lane changes. Stay in one lane as much as possible. If a lane change is necessary, signal your intent well in advance. Lastly, remember to "Get Out And Look" (GOAL) behind the truck before backing. Always use a spotter or traffic control assistance. Never back across traffic lanes without assistance.

### MAINTAIN PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Keep a minimum of six seconds behind the vehicle in front of you. Add more space if additional hazards, such as traffic congestion, construction zones, rain, fog, etc., are present.

### BE ATTENTIVE TO THE ROAD AHEAD

Make quick glances to side mirrors to monitor the traffic around the truck, then return your focus to the road ahead to avoid a rear-end crash.

### VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

Ensure turn signals on the tractor and trailer work properly. Clean windows and mirrors of debris, and ensure mirrors are adjusted properly before and during each trip. Make sure the backup beeper functions properly when the vehicle is in reverse.

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# Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

- |   |      |       |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. The "lean and look" method can help verify that a vehicle is not hidden in the tractor's right front blind spot  | True | False |
| 2. You should keep a minimum of six seconds behind the vehicle in front of you and add extra space if additional hazards, such as traffic congestion, construction zones, rain, fog, etc., are present. | True | False |
| 3. It is NOT necessary to clean windows and mirrors of debris, and ensure mirrors are adjusted properly before and during each trip.  | True | False |

Answers:  
1. True  
2. True  
3. False



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