

SMART DRIVER[®] August 2022

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN UNCOUPLING A TRAILER

Working around the truck can be just as dangerous as getting involved in a crash. One daily task a driver performs is uncoupling the trailer. This activity, if performed improperly, can result in shoulder and back strains, head injuries (e.g., cuts, abrasions, and concussions), as well as slips, trips, and falls. Read the information below, and determine if there are areas of your uncoupling technique that can be improved.

RECOGNIZE THE HAZARDS

ENVIRONMENT

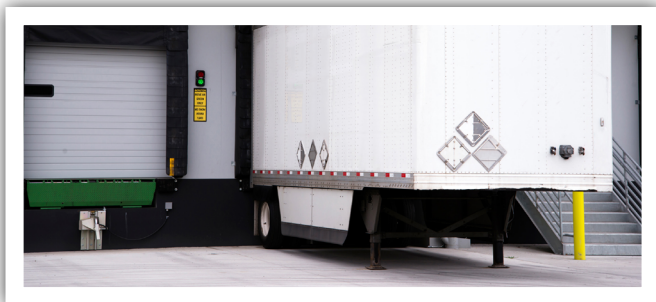
Slip hazards can include wet or dry contaminants, such as water, dirt, or oil, on the floor. Trip hazards can include open file drawers, boxes on a stairwell, or trash left on the floor. Falling from an elevated position can include into an open service pit, from a loading dock, tractor steps, or off a ladder.

EQUIPMENT

Slips, trips, and falls can occur when using equipment improperly. Slipping on a mechanic's roller seat in the shop, tripping over an extension cord, or falling off a ladder with a damaged rung are common hazards.

PERSONAL BEHAVIORS

Talking or texting on a device, talking to a co-worker, or eating and drinking while walking all divert your attention away from where you step and potential hazards in your path. Ignoring hazard signs and wearing improper footwear are other risky behaviors.



KNOW THE DEFENSE

BEFORE UNCOUPLING THE TRAILER

1. Get Out And Look (GOAL) to ensure the ground is level and can support the weight of the trailer.
2. Reposition the trailer to ensure your range of motion is not inhibited by nearby equipment.
3. Stretch to warm up your arms, legs, shoulders, and back.
4. Wear gloves to protect your hands.
5. Shut off the trailer's air supply to lock the trailer brakes.
6. Check the fifth wheel area for any slip, trip, and fall hazards.
7. Chock the trailer wheels.
8. Lower the landing gear.
9. Disconnect the trailer's air and electrical lines.

UNCOUPLING THE TRAILER

1. Use a fifth wheel pin puller to reduce the risk of a shoulder or back injury.
2. Bend at the knees, not with your back, if crouching underneath the trailer.
3. Be mindful not to hit your head.
4. Hook the release lever with the pin puller and grip it with both hands. If a pin puller is not available, grip the end of the fifth wheel release lever with both hands.
5. Face the fifth wheel. Position your feet shoulder-width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other for stability.
6. Pull back on the lever or pin puller with both hands in one slow, steady motion. Avoid jerking and twisting movements.
7. If the trailer fails to uncouple, you may need to rock the unit to loosen up the fifth wheel.

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Knowledge Verification

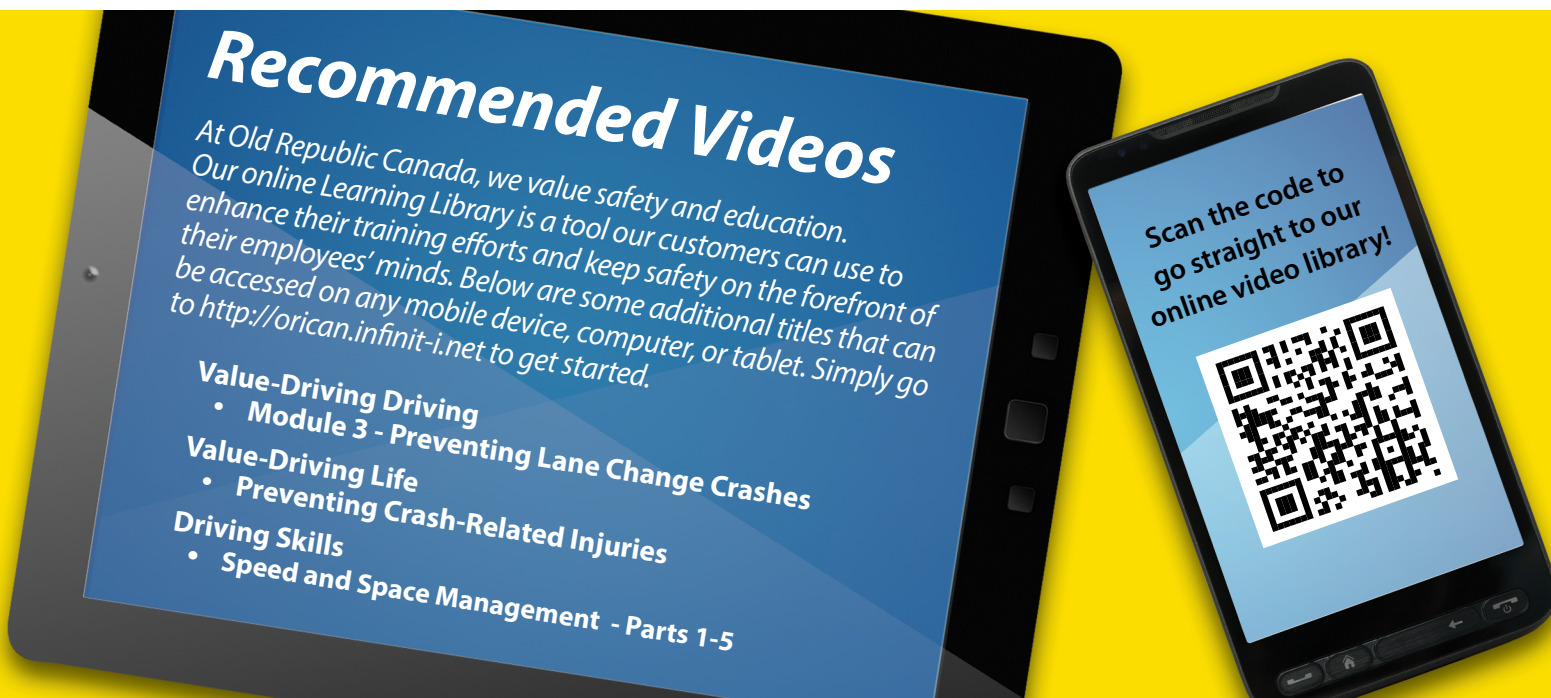
Driver's Name: _____ Driver's Signature: _____

Emp/Unit#: _____ Date: _____ Witness Name: _____

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

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Working around the truck can be just as dangerous as getting involved in a crash. | True | False |
| 2. Get Out And Look (GOAL) is an important step before uncoupling the trailer? | True | False |
| 3. Inattentive walking is perfectly fine while you work around your truck? | True | False |

Answers:
1. True
2. True
3. False



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