Commercial vehicle driving tips: How to protect your company, crew, and cars.



Businesses of all kinds rely on fleets to keep operations running smoothly. Whether you manage a few vehicles or a few hundred, fleet safety and efficiency are critical to your bottom line. These are the eight commercial vehicle driving tips every driver should follow.

1. **Wear your seat belt.** Without seat belts, the risk of being seriously injured or killed is significantly higher. And since 2016, wearing a seat belt has also been the law for drivers and passengers in large commercial trucks. Don't risk your life or legal repercussions. Buckle up properly every time.

2. **Set their speed for the situation.** If the roads are wet, there's reduced visibility, you're driving in the dark, or there's ice, reduce your speed. You should also increase your following distances in case a vehicle in front of you slams on the brakes or swerves.

3. **Review your route.** Before hitting the road, look at your route. Get a general sense of your turns and how long you'll be on each road or highway. Because driving down unfamiliar roads can also be a challenge, plan a route you're comfortable with before leaving and stick to it.

4. **Survey your surrounding.** Hazards aren't just in front of you; they can also be behind you or to the sides. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recommends checking mirrors every 8-10 seconds to be aware of vehicles entering your blind spots. Additionally, they suggest scanning about 15 seconds ahead of you on the road (equating to a quarter mile on interstates, or one to two blocks in cities) for traffic issues, work zones, and other dangers.

5. **Get enough sleep before getting behind the wheel.** Driver fatigue is dangerous. Pay attention

to the signs of drowsiness, like yawning, heavy eyes, and blurred vision. If you need a boost, consider pulling off at a safe stop for a short nap — it can be more effective than coffee. Since you're required to log downtime, make sure you're taking advantage of it, especially when you're tired.

6. **Don't drive distracted.** Drivers face distractions both inside and outside the vehicle. Try your best to avoid them with these strategies. Put your phone out of reach to avoid the temptation of looking at it and keep things like your water and sunglasses within reach. Use hands-free call features and pick your playlist before you go.

7. **Keep your distance.** Following another vehicle too closely makes it harder to avoid a collision. Did you know? Larger commercial fleet vehicles may need up to the length of two football fields to safely stop. Maintain greater following distances, and when in doubt, double it. You can never be too safe on the roads.

8. **Practice work zone safety.** Work zones can be unpredictable, with narrow lanes, sudden stops, and workers nearby. Reduce your speed and follow all posted signs and flaggers. A little extra caution goes a long way in protecting yourself, other vehicles, and the people working hard to improve the roads.

After implementing these commercial vehicle driving tips, take safety a step further. Download and complete our Commercial Safe Driving Agreement and have your team members do the same. Safer roads start with all of us. Have questions about commercial auto insurance? Talk to a local, independent agent today.

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