

Sharing the road with trucks

Explain dangers

As drivers, we are all partners in road safety. Whether we're behind the wheel of a large truck or a small car, we all play an important role in the health and well-being of those around us.

Although the size and weight of large trucks can create certain hazards for smaller vehicles, statistics show that the majority of fatal collisions between cars and trucks are caused by the driver of the car. Often the problem is that drivers do not understand the limitations of large trucks.

Identify controls

1. Give trucks more stopping distance

Trucks need a much longer braking distance than cars. Signal your intention to turn, slow down, or stop well ahead of time to give any trucks that are behind you more time to brake. When changing lanes, don't cut into a truck's space cushion, which is the space in front of a truck that allows the driver to brake safely. If you do, it will limit what the truck driver can do to avoid a collision.

2. Give trucks more turning room

Trucks need a lot of room when they turn. At intersections, truck drivers that are turning right may move into the left lane to avoid hitting the curb as they turn. If you ignore the truck's turn signals and pull up on its right side, you may be squeezed between the truck and the curb as it makes the turn.

3. Pass quickly but safely

When passing a truck, don't drive alongside it for too long and don't cut in too closely in front of the truck when you re-enter the lane. Wait until you see the entire front of the truck in your rear-view mirror before moving back into the lane. Always check your blind spot before pulling back in. Once you re-enter the lane, try to maintain your speed.

4. Slow down when a truck is passing you

Move to the right within your lane and slow down slightly to allow the truck to pass safely. Keep your eyes on the road ahead, but glance at your mirrors when necessary.

5. Keep the centre lane open

Don't block a truck's passing lane. On multi-lane highways, trucks longer than 6.5 m (21 ft) are not allowed to use the far-left lane. Instead they must use the lane immediately to the right to pass slower vehicles. On a three-lane highway, trucks use the centre lane to pass.

6. Watch out for wind pressure

Wind pressure created at high speeds by large trucks can make your vehicle harder to handle. Keep both hands on the steering wheel to maintain control.

7. Use headlights and wipers

In rainy or snowy weather, be sure you have your headlights and wipers on. The water or slush thrown off by a large truck can make it hard for you to see. If you can't see clearly enough to pass a truck, wait until you can.

8. Don't follow too closely

If a truck brakes suddenly and you're following too close, you can quickly find yourself in a serious rear-end collision. When following a truck, you should be able to see the driver in the mirror. Remember: If you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you.

9. Beware of blind spots

A truck's blind spots are beside the left door, directly behind the truck, and immediately in front of the truck. It's risky to drive in a truck's blind spot. Try to stay visible and never drive behind a truck when it is reversing. Mirrors don't show everything.

10. Remember the rollback

When stopping behind a truck on a hill or incline, leave at least one car length between your vehicle and the truck ahead. Trucks may roll backwards slightly because the driver has to take one foot off the brake and put it on the accelerator while operating the clutch with the other foot.

Demonstrate

Show your crew where the blind spots are located on a large truck.