

# 10

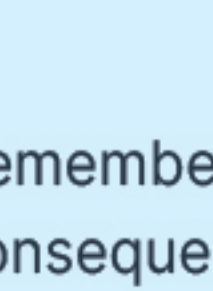


## safety tips for your commercial drivers

As a trucker, mastering safe driving is not just a skill; it's a responsibility that ensures the safety of yourself, your vehicle, and everyone sharing the road with you. Here are some essential tips to keep in mind, based on recommendations from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA):

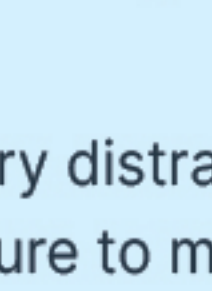
### 1 Stay focused

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognized three types of distracted driving:



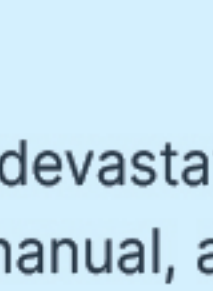
#### Visual

Taking your eyes off the road



#### Manual

Taking your hands off the steering wheel



#### Cognitive

Taking your mind off the task of driving

Remember, a momentary distraction can have devastating consequences, so be sure to maintain visual, manual, and cognitive control over driving.

### 2 Maintain proper following distance



The standard rule of thumb is to maintain a following distance of at least one car length for every 10 miles per hour of speed. However, in a long-haul truck, it's advisable to increase the distance even further due to the increased weight and longer stopping distance of a vehicle of that size. This extra buffer allows for more reaction time in case of sudden stops or emergencies.

### 3 Observe speed limits

Speed limits are not arbitrary; they are carefully set based on factors such as road conditions, traffic patterns, and the surrounding environment. Exceeding the speed limit not only increases the risk of accidents but also reduces your ability to react to unforeseen circumstances.

Make sure to always drive at a safe, controlled speed.



### 4 Practice defensive driving



Defensive driving involves being proactive rather than reactive. Drivers should stay alert to potential hazards such as erratic drivers, road construction, or adverse weather conditions. Maintain a safe distance from other vehicles and anticipate potential dangers before they occur.

### 5 Use your turn signals

Turn signals are a vital communication tool on the road. Signaling your intentions gives other drivers the information they need to react accordingly. Whether changing lanes or making a turn, always use your turn signals in advance to signal your next move.

### 6 Check your blind spots



Trucks have larger blind spots, especially on the right side and directly behind the vehicle. Use your mirrors effectively, but also physically turn your head to check blind spots before changing lanes or making maneuvers. If you can't see a driver's face in their mirror, they likely can't see you. The FMCSA advises truckers to check their blind spot every 8-10 seconds and to scan the road ahead every 15 seconds to maintain awareness of surroundings.

### 7 Take breaks when needed

Drivers should keep tabs on themselves physically. Drivers may not be aware as fatigue starts to kick in. **Drowsy driving** and highway hypnosis can be dangerous. In fact, a AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Research study, found that "16% to 21% of all police-reported fatal vehicle crashes likely involve drowsy driving." Take regular breaks to rest, stretch, and recharge. Consider following the "10-4" rule, taking a 10 minute break for every 4 hours of driving.



### 8 Inspect your vehicle regularly



Pre-trip inspections are essential for **ensuring your vehicle is in optimal condition** before hitting the road. Check tire pressure, tread wear, brakes, lights, mirrors, fluid levels, and any other essential components. Address issues promptly to avoid breakdowns or accidents on the road.

### 9 Be mindful of weather conditions

Adverse weather conditions can pose significant challenges for truckers. Rain, snow, fog, and high winds can affect visibility, traction, and control, so adjust your driving speed and technique accordingly, and always err on the side of caution when conditions are less than ideal.



### 10 Stay calm in traffic



Traffic congestion can be frustrating, but maintain a calm demeanor, keep a safe distance from other vehicles, and avoid engaging in confrontations with other drivers. Stay patient and avoid aggressive driving behaviors like tailgating or sudden lane changes. Remember, patience is key to navigating traffic safely.

Safe driving isn't just about following rules; it's about making smart decisions and prioritizing safety at all times. By mastering these techniques and staying vigilant on the road, you can help prevent accidents and ensure a safer journey for everyone. Drive safe!

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