



# Safe Driving Tips for Operators of Small Vehicles

When driving on the highway, you are at a serious disadvantage if involved in a crash with a larger vehicle. In crashes involving large trucks, the occupants of a car, usually the driver, sustain 78 percent of fatalities. In order to keep you and your family safe when driving around large trucks and buses, you should be extra cautious. Sharing the road with larger vehicles can be dangerous if you are not aware of their limitations. Here are a few tips to help you drive safer.

## Cutting in Front Can Cut Your Life Short

If you cut in front of another vehicle, you may create an emergency-braking situation for the vehicles around you, especially in heavy traffic. Trucks and buses take much longer to stop in comparison to smaller vehicles. If you force a larger vehicle to stop quickly, this could cause a serious, even fatal, accident. When passing, look for the front of the truck in your rearview mirror before pulling in front and avoid braking situations!

## Buckle Your Belts

Always buckle your seat belt. Seat belts are your best protection in case of a crash, especially if you get into an accident with a large vehicle. Trucks require a greater stopping distance and can seriously hurt you if your car is struck from behind. However, your seat belt will keep you from striking the steering wheel or windshield, being thrown around, and from being ejected from the car. Wearing a seat belt is the single most important thing you can do to save your life, especially in a crash with a large truck.

## Watch Your Blind Spots - The "No-Zones"

Large trucks have blind spots, or No-Zones, around the front, back, and sides of the truck. These No-Zones make it difficult for the driver to see. So, don't hang out in the No-Zones, and remember, if you can't see the truck driver in the truck's mirror, the truck driver can't see you.

## Inattentive Drivers

Inattentive drivers do not pay attention to driving or what is going on around them. They can be just as dangerous as aggressive drivers when they drive slowly in the passing lane, ignore brake lights or signals, and create an emergency-braking situation. They also create dangerous situations when they attempt to do other things while driving, such as using cell phones. When you are driving, please focus only on the road. If you need to attend to another matter while driving, safely pull over in a parking lot or rest stop.

## Aggressive Drivers

Aggressive drivers can be dangerous drivers. Speeding, running red lights and stop signs, pulling in front of trucks too quickly when passing, and making frequent lane changes, especially in the blind spots of trucks, can create dangerous and potentially fatal situations on the road.



## Avoid Squeeze Play

Be careful of trucks making wide right turns. If you try to get in between the truck and the curb, you'll be caught in a "squeeze" and can suffer a serious accident. Truck drivers sometimes need to swing wide to the left in order to safely negotiate a right turn, especially in urban areas. They can't see cars directly behind or beside them. So pay attention to truck signals, and give them lots of room to maneuver.

## Never Drink and Drive

Drinking and driving don't mix. Alcohol affects a person's ability to make crucial driving decisions, such as braking, steering, or changing lanes. Remember, you are not the only one in danger when you decide to drink and then drive. You are sharing the road with everyone, and your chances of getting into an accident are greatly increased. If you get into an accident with a truck, you're out of luck. The odds of surviving a serious accident with a large truck are too low. So think before you drink.

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