



Defensive Driving



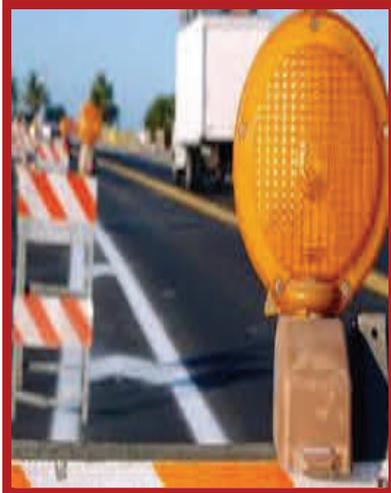
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I-64 Interchange at Route 15, Zion Crossroads, diverging diamond interchange. (Photo by Tom Saunders, VDOT)

Be Alert. Be Cautious. Travel Safely Through Road Work Zones



Roads across the nation are starting to show the strain from the winter snow and salt treatments. Spring brings with it longer days and warmer temperatures and the ideal time to repair distressed roads. Subsequently, spring is the unofficial start of road construction work. Truck drivers should always be alert and prepared for the dangers of traveling through work zones. Being distracted while driving through work zones jeopardizes the safety of the people who are working in them. A report issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2010 reported that more than 87,600 crashes occurred in work zones. Certainly, that number may have increased in more recent years. Workers are moving in and out of work zones on foot and on equipment. In work zones, heavy equipment can often be in operation above your vehicle.

Drivers can minimize the chance of an accident in a work zone by staying focused on what is occurring in front of, behind, above and on both sides of your vehicle. When approaching highway construction zones, observe all warning signs and reduce your speed to the posted limit. Be ready to stop unexpectedly, especially if you see a flagger. Stopping a tractor trailer takes more space and time than passenger vehicles. Turn on your flashers to warn others behind you that you have stopped. Do not tailgate. Leave yourself a way out if the vehicle ahead of you becomes disabled. Look well ahead while driving. At lane closures, safely merge into the lane that is open as soon as you recognize you are approaching a closed lane.

Stay vigilant as you drive through all roadway work zones. Whenever possible, plan ahead and use alternative routes to avoid traveling through work zones all together. As a professional truck driver, you must always drive responsibly to protect yourself and others driving and working on the highways. Be alert. Be cautious at all times.





Offensive and Defensive Truck Driving - What Is The Difference?

An offensive driver pays little attention to other vehicles on the road and does not consider how his driving will affect traffic. The offensive driver does not signal before changing lanes, cuts off other drivers, stops abruptly and uses excessive speed. This method of driving is extremely dangerous and involves a lot of risk that can lead to road rage or accidents. The professional truck driver never uses this method. On the other hand, the defensive driver is a skilled driver who is always expecting the unexpected. The defensive driver follows the Smith System Five Principles of Safe Driving:

1. **Aim High In Steering - Look far ahead in your direction of travel.**
2. **The Big Picture - Be aware of what is around your vehicle.**
3. **Keep Your Eyes Moving - Consistent eye movement helps you stay alert.**
4. **Leave Yourself an Out - Do not follow vehicles too closely to avoid getting boxed in.**
5. **Make Sure They See You - Keep your lights on and use your horn if necessary.**

Whether you are driving your commercial truck or your personal car, always drive defensively. Think safety at all times.



What To Do After A Hit and Run



If you are involved in a hit and run accident, try to get as much details about the accident so you can report it to the police and provide details to the customer to report the incident to their insurance agency. The fleeing driver can get away quickly making getting details about the vehicle and the driver very difficult. You will have to rely a lot on what your eyes saw and mind recorded within seconds. Here are some dos and don'ts for handling a hit and run occurrence.

DON'T

Follow the fleeing driver. If you leave the accident scene the police could question who is really at fault. In addition, following the driver can lead to an unwanted altercation.

DO

Immediately call the police, the customer and your branch to report the incident. Get as much information about the driver, car and accident as possible, including: License plate number; the other vehicle's make, model and color; location of the damage to the other vehicle; which direction the other vehicle was headed and the location, time and cause of the accident. Remember to take photos of the damage to your vehicle for your internal accident report. Ask anyone in the area if they saw the hit and run. If so, ask the witnesses if they can offer additional information about the incident. If they do, ask them for their names and contact information. Follow these same procedures if the incident occurred on the highway or in a parking area.

Keep in mind, TFI's policy is to report all accidents to your branch immediately whether you think the accident or incident is minor or not.

On The Road To Better Health



Regular exercise and maintaining a proper diet are huge challenges for truck drivers who spend most days in a truck cab. To help with a diet that leads to good health and creative ways to exercise, there's an app for that! Maintaining a healthy lifestyle has gone mobile. There is a website, <https://www.goodhealth.com/> and a free App - Good Health! By Ascension Health.

This website and app are a one-stop-shop for all the information you need to stay well. There are suggestions for activities, recipes and a living well blog with plenty of helpful articles to maintain good health. Examples of some of the current articles include: "3 Activities to Add to Your Day" and "Outdoor Training Tips."

The Good Health website was launched in 1996 by the Seton Healthcare Family. Retailers, restaurants and service providers are behind this innovation to provide suggestions for healthy recipes, activities and restaurants. You answer four basic questions to create a profile and personal preferences to tailor the app to your specific goals.

Regular walks around your truck while waiting to get unloaded and doing stretches outside of your truck are ageless and timeless ways of staying fit while on duty. Choosing soups and salads in place of burgers and fries will always save on calories. The weather is nice. Walk to explore local sites and burn calories at the same time.

You CAN Quit Smoking!

Several types of cancer deaths and some chronic diseases are directly linked to smoking. However, the moment you quit, the harmful effects of smoking are instantly reversed. After only 20 minutes of your last cigarette, your heart rate returns to normal. Within 24 hours, the carbon monoxide level of your blood level returns. In two to three weeks, the odds of having a heart attack is lowered.

These are great benefits but any smoker knows to quit is easier said than done. Smoking is the brain's addiction to nicotine. Consequently, for many people, the ability to quit smoking will need to involve more than simply tossing out the cigarettes. However, with some thought and planning you can quit!

There are different methods and approaches to meet this goal. Consider these tips and part ways with your cigarettes for good.

- 1) Find a personal reason to quit that is important enough to you to motivate your decision to stop.
- 2) Consult your physician or pharmacists for recommendations for nicotine replacement therapy to help counter withdrawal symptoms if you need to.
- 3) Find alternative ways to relax or relieve stress - walking, listening to music or making time for a hobby.
- 4) Join a quit smoking support group in person or online. You can find groups at <http://whyquit.com/>.

Remember to be patient with yourself as you move through the process of smoking cessation. You can do it!





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