

In the Safety Zone™

A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness

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Defensive Driving Tips

1. Always complete pre-trip and post-trip inspections.
2. Follow the posted speed limits.
3. Leave enough space to maintain a safe braking distance.
4. Exercise care when changing lanes and at intersections.
5. Use your turn signals to communicate with other drivers.

To Drive Safely is to Drive Defensively

Truck driving is a hazardous occupation. In fact, truck drivers have more nonfatal injuries than workers in any other occupation. But it's a lot safer if you drive defensively. Defensive driving means more than just watching out for bad drivers. It's a set of learned behaviors to keep yourself (and others) safe on the road. Here's how to think and act like a defensive driver:



Behaviors of a Defensive Driver

- Search ahead of what is immediately in front of you to have advance warning of approaching hazards. Scan far enough ahead to be able to react safely to approaching situations.
- Watch for cars passing, merging, changing lanes, putting on their brakes, and signaling to turn.
- Assume that other drivers may make mistakes, and be on guard in the event an error is made.
- Adjust speed, position, direction, and your level of attention to be able to maneuver safely if a hazard develops.
- Frequently scan to the side and rear for passing or approaching vehicles.
- Avoid sudden stops.
- Give the vehicles behind you a warning by tapping quickly on your brakes once or twice.
- Use turn signals and brakes well in advance. Give drivers behind you plenty of opportunity to see your warning lights so they can begin to slow down. Give them the opportunity to avoid stopping suddenly.
- Carefully scan the road and the vehicles around you before changing speed or direction.
- Use your turn signal before you make a turn so other drivers know the direction in which you will be going.
- Drive with lights on to ensure that you can see other drivers—and other drivers can see you.

Inside this issue:

Take the High Road	2
Defensive Driving and Seat Belt Use	2
What Causes Accidents	2
Reducing Injuries While Driving	3
Performing Inspections	3

Take the High Road- Drive for the Safety of Others!

Many passenger car drivers may not realize how hard it is for a loaded truck to stop or maneuver. They will often cut you off or slip right in front of you and slow suddenly. On any given day, you could encounter any of the following scenarios.

- Reckless driving, such as speeding, weaving through traffic, ignoring signs and signals, tailgating, and dangerous passing;
- Distracted drivers, including drivers using cell phones, putting on make-up, eating or drinking, writing or reading, and having conversations with passengers;
- Aggressive drivers, who can easily create a “road rage” situation that is dangerous for all drivers.



These are everyday scenarios that pose inherent risks to every driver on the road. In these situations, take the high road! Being alert and driving defensively means that you are always driving not only for your safety, but also for the safety of others on the road –in spite of their behavior!



Defensive Drivers Wear Their Seat Belts!

TransForce Drivers know that wearing your seat belt is required at all times when operating trucks and any other equipment where a seat belt is provided. Wearing a seat belt is also a component of driving defensively. It can't be stressed enough that seat belts save lives! A 2006 study by the Department of Transportation looked at the use of seat belts by Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers. Its review of unbelted driver fatalities and serious injuries indicated that 39 percent of unbelted driver fatalities could have been prevented. In addition, of those unbelted drivers who were injured, 47% to 81% could have either prevented or reduced the severity of their injuries.

What causes truck accidents?

There was a study presented by the European Commission and the International Road Transport Union that dealt with the causes of accidents that involved trucks. The report found that 85% of accidents involving trucks are caused by human error. Of interest, in 75% of the cases involving human error, the fault was with the driver of the passenger vehicle and in only 25% of the cases was the error the fault of the truck driver. As one might expect, the principal causes included speeding, improper lane changes and failure to observe intersection rules (source: American Trucking Association, Truckline newsletter).

These studies reinforce the role of high-quality drivers. At TransForce, truck safety is of paramount importance. We want you to be safe and we want the traveling public to be safe. Take note of the three main causes of accidents and practice defensive driving so you will not be involved in motor vehicle accidents.

Reduce the Risk of Injuries While Driving

Did you know that you can do more to avoid injuries and strains when you're driving over a lengthy period of time?

Here are some things you can do:

1. Stretch out your hands, arms, legs and back during rest periods.
2. Keep your head and neck in line with your torso.
3. Keep your hands and wrists in line with your forearms while driving.
4. Relax your shoulders.
5. Adjust your seat so that the upper and lower back is properly supported.
6. Take a deep breath periodically. It helps the body to relax.



Q. How do I protect myself from roadside inspections?

A. Pre-trip and post-trip inspections!

Under the new CSA 2010 regulations, all drivers' roadside inspection results will be monitored by the Department of Transportation as well as the motor carriers. It is even more important to conduct complete pre-trip and post-trip inspections of your vehicle. Pre-trip inspections enable drivers to 'catch' any potential problems before they are caught by a state trooper. By the same token, completing post-trip inspections is the only way to be sure that repairs are completed. The driver is in the best position to communicate problems encountered during the most recent trip. Both pre-trip and post-trip inspections are required by the **TransForce Work Rules**.

The [CSA 2010 Guide for Drivers](http://www.transforce.com) is available at www.transforce.com.

Coming In the December Issue of *In The Safety Zone*[™]:

- Slip and Fall Prevention
 - Promote Safety Winners
 - Winter Driving
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