

Teens & Trucks – Tips for Sharing the Road Safely

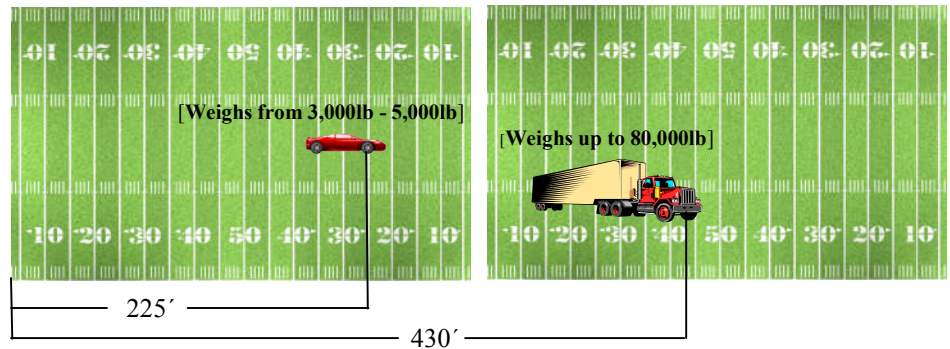
Tractor trailers, buses and other large commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) are a vital, important part of our national economy. These vehicles are the “wheels of commerce” for our nation. While truck and bus drivers do contribute to some traffic crashes, research shows that too many drivers of passenger cars, especially young people ages 16 to 24 years old, unnecessarily endanger themselves (5,390 teen fatalities 2003-2007) by failing to recognize that large CMVs and cars differ in their handling characteristics. As a result of these unsafe actions, between 56% and 70% of traffic crashes involving large CMVs and passenger vehicles are the fault of the passenger vehicle driver, according to various studies.

Types of Vehicles on the Road

Besides passenger vehicles, there are many types of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Some common CMVs are straight trucks, tractor semi-trailers, specially constructed vehicles that haul over-dimensional loads, motor coaches and transit buses. It is important to understand that these vehicles differ dramatically in their handling characteristics compared to passenger vehicles.

Factors that Determine Stopping Distance

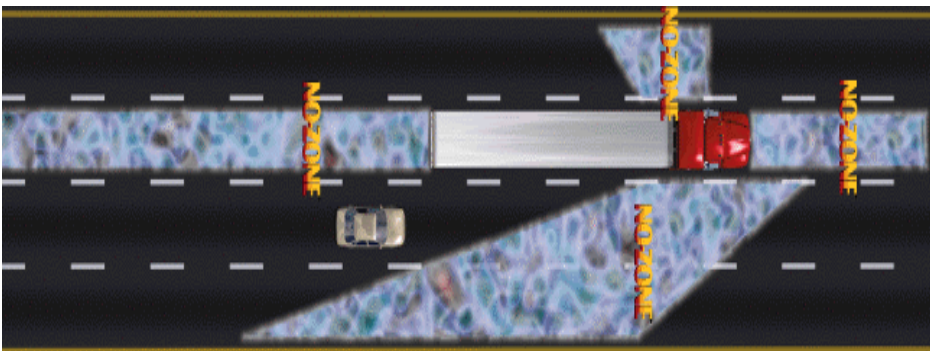
Total stopping distance includes perception of the hazard, reaction time, and the distance your vehicle travels while the brakes are applied until it comes to a complete stop. A fully loaded tractor trailer weighing 80,000 pounds traveling under ideal conditions at a speed of 55 miles per hour will take 430 feet to stop, or almost the length of two football fields. This is a 91% longer stopping distance than that of a passenger vehicle.



Don't Cut Off CMVs

When passing a truck or bus, don't pull out if you're being overtaken by traffic from behind. Once you have decided it is safe to pass, declare your intention to pass by using your turn signal. Pull out and complete your pass as quickly and safely as possible. After you pass, be sure to move back into your original lane only when you can see the front of the CMV in your rearview mirror.

Stay Out of the Blind Spots



Trucks and buses have very large blind spots. Do not drive in a CMV's blind spots. Pass trucks and buses only on their left-hand side.

The NO Zone diagram to the left clearly shows a truck's blind spots or NO Zones. A passenger vehicle driving in these NO

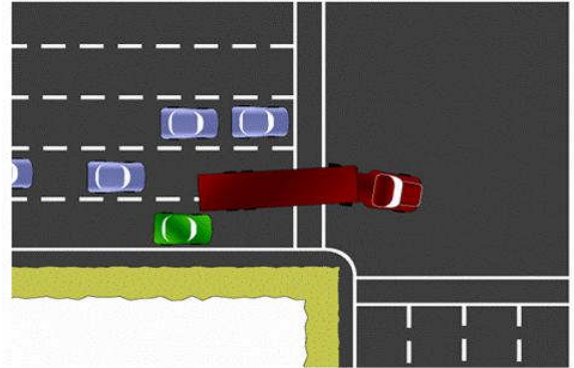
Following Distance

While it is never safe to tailgate any vehicle on the highway, following too close is particularly dangerous around large trucks and buses. The size of these vehicles prevents you from seeing the road ahead and having sufficient time to react to slowing or stopped traffic, or another obstacle. Maintain at least a 3-second following distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Pick out an object near the road such as an overpass or road sign. When the vehicle in front of you passes that object, start counting, “one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three”. If you are maintaining at least a 3-second following distance, you will not pass that same object until you say “one-thousand-three”. If you pass the object before “one-thousand-three”, slow down and adjust your following distance accordingly.

CMVs Make Wide Turns

A common cause of crashes between cars and large CMVs at intersections is the inability of motorists to accurately determine the speed of an approaching large truck or bus before turning into the intersection. When in doubt about the speed of an oncoming truck or bus, do not turn left into its path or pull into its lane in an attempt to pass another vehicle. Even at legal speeds, the truck or bus may be going faster than you think.

Because of their overall length, large trucks and buses have a longer turning radius. Often large CMVs will move into adjacent lanes prior to and after a turning movement to avoid driving over a curb or sidewalk. This can be dangerous for other drivers who are not aware of or don't expect these movements.



Because of their large size, remember that a CMV making a right turn may first swing left to clear the corner. Conversely, a truck or bus making a left turn may first swing right to clear vehicles and other objects on its left side. Expect this and be prepared!

Moving Off the Road

Any time a mechanical or other problem forces you to exit the highway or road, move as far off the roadway to the right as possible. Please keep in mind that some of the most deadly traffic crashes occur when distracted, inattentive, or impaired drivers drift off the road to the right and strike stopped cars or large commercial motor vehicles. Investigations into these accidents often show that the driver never applied his or her brakes. As a result, the impact force and the severity of these crashes are often much greater.

Many states have enacted “*move over*” laws that require motorists to move over or slow down when police officers and other emergency service personnel are present on the side of the road.

Buckle Up!

Buckle Up! If you follow these “share the road” tips and remember to always wear your seat belt, you'll be a safer driver!

Teens & Trucks Share the Road Partners

AAA of Arizona
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Arizona Department of Public Safety
Arizona Department of Transportation/Motor Vehicle Division
Arizona Trucking Association
Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance
DrivingMBA
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Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety
National Safety Council - Arizona Chapter
Operation Safe Driver
Patricia Resetar/Mountain Ridge High School
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SVJ Consulting, Inc.
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For more information on “*Teens & Trucks: Share the Road*” contact Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance on the web at www.operationsafedriver.com or www.cvs.org.