



## Sharing the Road with Large Trucks and Buses

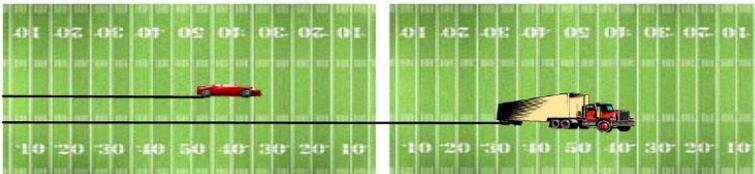
Large commercial trucks and passenger buses are a vital, important part of our nation's economy, providing safe, reliable transportation of goods and people over long distances.

While truck and bus drivers are sometimes at fault in traffic crashes, research shows that too many drivers of passenger cars, especially inexperienced drivers, needlessly place themselves in danger by failing to recognize that large commercial vehicles differ from cars in their handling characteristics. As a result, over half of all traffic crashes involving large trucks or buses and passenger cars are the fault of the car driver.

Trucks and buses have longer wheel bases that make them more difficult to turn and maneuver in tight spaces. As a result, these vehicles sometimes have to swerve into the lane to their left to make a tight right-hand turn.

Trucks and buses also weigh much more than passenger cars. Because of their increased weight, these large vehicles take longer to stop than a passenger car.

A semi truck and trailer can weigh up to 80,000 pounds fully loaded with freight. Traveling at 55 mph under ideal road conditions, such a truck combination would need 430 feet to stop – or 1 ½ times the length of a football field. As illustrated below, this is the stopping distance – 91 percent longer than that of a passenger car.



Car stopping distance at 55 mph

Truck stopping distance at 55 mph

### Stay Out of No Zones

The best way to avoid most crashes around large trucks and buses is actually very simple: stay out of the blind spots or "No Zones." A large percentage of crashes between cars and trucks occur when cars move into the area around a truck where the driver can't see them. Give large trucks and buses plenty of room, stay out of the No Zone, don't tailgate and don't cut them off.

Area 1 – The first No Zone is directly in front of the hood. Long hoods can create blind spots up to 20 feet in front of the bumper. That's enough room for a car to move into without being seen. Traveling in this blind spot leaves the truck driver no room to stop or maneuver if the car suddenly swerves or brakes to avoid a hazard.

Area 2 – Each side of a large truck also has a No Zone. On the driver's side, the No Zone extends from the driver's door to the middle of the trailer. Passenger cars should move through this zone steadily and not linger.

Area 3 – The No Zone on the right side is much larger, stretching from the front of the truck all the way to the rear and three lanes over. If the truck driver has to make a wide right turn, a car in the right-side No Zone would be directly in its path. Avoid passing trucks and buses on the right side, if possible.

Area 4 – Another No Zone is directly behind the trailer where a car driver's visibility is severely limited. A simple rule to remember is this: If you can't see one or both of the truck's side-view mirrors, the truck driver can't see you.

Stay out of the No Zones around large trucks and buses and you'll greatly improve your chances of arriving at your destination safely.

Visit [www.operationsafedriver.org](http://www.operationsafedriver.org) for more information on safe driving practices around large trucks and buses.

