

SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

Preventing Lane Change Crashes

Trucks are bigger and heavier than most vehicles on the road. As such, they require more space to maneuver and can cause more damage in the event of a crash. If your truck collides with another vehicle, it can set off a chain reaction that may include several vehicles, considerable damage and severe injuries.

When driving a truck, one action that has a high risk of leading to an accident is making a lane change.

Preparation

Preventing lane change crashes starts before you even get on the road. Get ahead of the game by following these steps:

- Set your GPS device before you start driving so that you are not distracted trying to do so later.
- Talk to dispatch before your trip about any potential delays, construction or detours that might affect you.
- Inspect your mirrors to make sure that they are clean and aligned properly.
- Make sure that your seat is positioned so that you can see the full surfaces of all mirrors.

On the Road

Once you're en route, the risks and hazards of the road come in all shapes and sizes. Maximize your own safety, and that of others on the road, with these tips:

- Limit your lane changes by staying in one lane as much as possible.
- When considering making a lane change, such as to pass a slower vehicle, observe traffic conditions around you. If you are not able to execute a pass quickly, it can affect many other vehicles and the overall flow of traffic.
- Obey all traffic laws and avoid speeding.
- Do not follow too closely. Maintain a minimum six-second following distance.
- Avoid distractions, such as talking on your cellphone. If you need to make a call, pull over or park before doing so.

Changing Lanes

It is important to take your time and plan ahead when making a lane change. Properly executing the maneuver can be an extended process, so remember these steps in order to minimize risk:

- Activate your turn signal well in advance and be aware that drivers in your blind spots may not be able to see it.
- Leave your signal on and check your side mirrors multiple times to make sure the lane is clear.
- Check your blind spots by slowing down to allow other vehicles to appear in your mirror, or by using the "lean and look" method.
- Once you believe that it is safe to make a lane change, do so slowly and continue checking your mirrors throughout the maneuver.
- Do not be forceful. If you are not able to make a lane change before your exit, get off at the next one. A delay is far less costly than a crash.