

# Tips for Bicyclists & Pedestrians



Bicyclists and pedestrians present safety concerns on the road for all drivers: they are slower than motor vehicles, lack protection in a crash, and are hard for drivers to see – particularly those driving trucks and buses.

It's vital that bicyclists and pedestrians also understand the risk of large trucks and buses, and be proactive in staying safe.

## 1. Stay Out of the Blind Spots

Never walk or ride too close to a large truck or bus. These vehicles have huge blind spots in the front, back, and on the sides, which make it difficult for the drivers to see pedestrians and bicyclists around them.

Always assume the driver does not see you and take extra care. If you can't see the driver in the vehicle mirrors, the driver can't see you.

Never walk or ride behind a truck or bus while it is backing up; drivers often cannot see directly behind the vehicle.

## 2. Prepare for Wide Turns

If a large vehicle is stopped at an intersection or is about to turn right, never walk or ride between the vehicle and the curb. Commercial vehicles make wide turns and could easily hit you as they complete the turn.

## 3. Respect Long Stopping Distances

Large blind spots and long stopping distances can be a deadly combination. Never cross in front of a moving truck, or cut in too close after passing a truck or bus on a bike.

## 4. Make Yourself Visible

Wear bright clothing during the daytime. At night or during bad weather, wear reflective clothing, use reflectors and lights on your bike, and carry a flashlight and/or wear a headlight while walking.

## 5. Obey Traffic Laws, Signals, and Signs

Cyclists must stop at red lights and stop signs and should ride with the flow of traffic.

Pedestrians should obey signals and cross at intersections and crosswalks.

Never assume that because you have the right of way drivers will see you and yield.

## 6. Stay Alert and Undistracted

Listening to music leaves a rider or pedestrian unable to hear sirens, horns, and other warnings.

Earbuds in combination with cellphones often result in pedestrians who walk into other people – or out into traffic –





putting themselves and others at risk. If a text, call, game or music can't wait, stop walking while you use your device.

### 7. Don't Ride or Walk Impaired

Alcohol decreases motor skills and judgment whether you're driving, on a bike, or even walking. Alcohol use is a major factor in pedestrian fatalities. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that in 2013, 34% of all pedestrians killed in vehicle crashes had a blood alcohol content of .08 or higher (as opposed to 15% of the drivers involved in pedestrian fatalities).

If you've been drinking, find a safe ride or take public transportation rather than risking your safety or that of others on the road.



## More Safety Tips For Bicyclists

### 1. Wear Your Helmet

Always wear a well-fitting, properly situated safety helmet when riding – riding into a truck or bus is equivalent to hitting a steel wall.

### 2. Stay Aware of Traffic

Always be aware of the traffic around you, especially when riding near large trucks and buses. Watch for signals and brake lights. Signal well in advance, but never assume that drivers see your hand signals. Always ride defensively.

### 3. Check Your Brakes

Always check your brakes before riding. You must be ready to stop quickly – never assume a truck or bus will be able to stop fast enough.



## More Safety Tips For Pedestrians

### 1. Watch Your Walkways

Walk on sidewalks and in crosswalks whenever possible. Pay attention to walk signals.

Never stand in the street while waiting to cross. Keep a safe distance back when standing on corners as turning trucks and buses occasionally run up onto sidewalk corners and curbs.

### 2. Be Extra Alert in Parking Lots, Filling Stations, and Rest Stops

Locations where trucks must back up and navigate tight spaces can be particularly dangerous. Be careful to stay out of the way (and out of blind spots).

### 3. Take Extra Care at Bus Stops

Before crossing in front of a stopped bus, make sure the bus is not about to proceed, and that the driver sees you.

### 4. Watch for Wide Loads

Trucks with wide loads have especially limited visibility and difficulty maneuvering. They make even wider right turns, require more space, and take even longer to stop. Keep your distance when walking around wide load carriers.



# Tips for CMV Drivers



## 1. Defense! Defense!

Commercial drivers have to be constantly vigilant to detect unexpected road conditions, distracted drivers, and motorists who don't understand how commercial vehicles operate.

Scan ahead about 15 seconds (a quarter mile on interstates, or one to two blocks in cities) for traffic issues, work zones, and other dangers. Check mirrors every 8-10 seconds to be aware of vehicles entering your blind spots.

## 2. Signal for Safety

Signal and brake to give other drivers plenty of time to notice your intent. If you must pull off the road, use flashers, reflective triangles, and road flares to alert approaching drivers.

## 3. Know When to Slow Down

Driving too fast for weather or road conditions, or failing to slow down for curves or ramps, create risks for spills, rollovers, and crashes.

## 4. Maintain Your Vehicle

Make sure pre-trip safety inspections are completed, particularly for tires and brakes. Your life depends on them. Make sure your load is well balanced and secure, as a shifting load can cause a rollover or loss of control.

## 5. Buckle Up

Use your seat belt every time. Seat belts save lives, reduce injuries, and allow drivers to stay inside and in control of their vehicles in case of a crash. In 2014, 30% of truck drivers involved in fatal crashes were partially or totally ejected from their vehicles.

## 6. Stay Sharp

Get enough rest – don't drive when you're fatigued, too ill to focus, or on medications (including over-the-counter medicine) that make you drowsy or dizzy.

## 7. Get the Right Information for Trip Planning

Stay up to date on weather, road conditions, detours, and mountainous routes in order to plan driving time. Be aware that non-commercial navigation systems and apps may not provide warning of height and weight limitations and other commercial vehicle restrictions.

## 8. Practice Work Zone Safety

Work zones present many hazards, like lane shifts, sudden stops, uneven road surfaces, moving workers and equipment, and confused passenger vehicle drivers. In 2014, 30% of fatal work zone crashes involved at least one large truck compared to only 11% of all fatal crashes



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– so it’s vital to take work zone safety seriously. Slow down, maintain extra following space, and be prepared to stop. Obey all work zone signs and signals. Scan ahead for changing traffic patterns and be alert to vehicles entering your blind spots. Keep a sharp eye out for road workers and flag crews.

### 9. Never Drive Distracted

Texting is among the worst driving distractions. The odds of being involved in a crash, near-crash, or unintentional lane deviation are 23.2 times greater for truck and bus drivers who are texting while driving. Research shows that drivers texting while driving took their eyes off the forward road for 4.6 seconds on average. At 55 mph, this equates to traveling 371 feet (more than the length of a football field) without looking at the road.

It is illegal for a commercial driver to text while driving, and there are restrictions on using mobile phones (devices must be hands free, and dialed using no more than one button).

Eating, drinking, interacting with a navigational device, reading a map, controlling a pet, or any other activity that takes focus off the road can also be a distraction.

If you must attend to an activity other than driving, get off at the next exit or pull over – it’s not worth the risk.

Find more commercial motor vehicle driving tips at:  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/driver-safety/cm-v-driving-tips-overview](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/driver-safety/cm-v-driving-tips-overview).



# Tips for Driving Safely Around Large Trucks or Buses

Large trucks and buses (commercial motor vehicles, or CMVs) have operating limitations such as large blind spots, long stopping distances, and limited maneuverability that make it essential for other vehicles to put extra focus on safety.

Fortunately, you can take simple actions to avoid experiencing or causing problems involving trucks and buses by following these Ten Rules of the Road.

## 1. Stay out of the Blind Spots

Large trucks and buses have huge blind spots around the front, back, and sides of the vehicle.

If you can't see the driver in the truck's side mirror, assume that the driver can't see you.

Don't drive in a blind spot – slow down or move ahead to stay visible.

Be particularly careful when merging near a truck or bus. You may likely be in a blind spot.

## 2. Pass Safely

Make sure you can see the driver in the bus or truck's side mirror before passing. Signal clearly, then move into the left lane and accelerate so that you can get past the truck or bus safely and promptly. Don't linger in the blind spot. Make sure the truck or bus is visible in your rear

view mirror before you pull in front; give it extra space.

Avoid passing trucks and buses on a downgrade where they tend to pick up speed. Never pass from the right lane.

When a bus or truck is passing you, stay to the right and slow down slightly. Giving the driver room to pass safely helps get you out of the blind spot quicker. Remember to give trucks and buses plenty of space to merge in front of you when coming off ramps or changing lanes.

## 3. Don't Cut It Close

Cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous, but it's especially dangerous to cut off a bus or large truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you're likely to be in a blind spot so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you're visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the amount of time it takes to stop.

## 4. Stay Back

Tailgating a truck or bus presents added dangers. It puts you in a blind spot. Because trucks are so high off the ground, if you fail to stop in time (or get hit from behind) your vehicle could slide under the truck, with devastating results.





Getting too close when stopped is also dangerous – particularly on an upgrade, where a bus or truck might roll back.

### 5. Anticipate Wide Turns

Buses and trucks require extra turning room – they swing wide, or may even initiate a turn from a middle lane.



If a truck or bus has its turn signal on, never try to squeeze by it or get between the vehicle and the curb.

When you stop at an intersection, never “block the box” or stop in front of the line, as buses and trucks require that space to complete turns safely.



### 6. Be Patient

Trucks and buses have operating restrictions, and sometimes use technology like speed limiters. Honking, driving aggressively, or weaving through traffic won't make the trip faster, but can cause dangerous distractions and crashes.

### 7. Buckle Up

Wearing your seat belt is one of the most important things that you and your passengers can do to save your lives. A seat belt may keep you in your seat and help you maintain control of your vehicle. The safest place for kids is in the backseat, buckled up or in a car seat. Be safe and always buckle up!

### 8. Stay Focused

Never attend to a text, a call, GPS, or an app while driving. Distracted driving can be as dangerous as driving impaired. Even eating while driving or adjusting your radio can take your eyes off the road long enough for a crash to occur.

Don't underestimate the speed (or overestimate the distance) of a truck or bus, particularly when making turns, merging, or changing lanes.

### 9. Don't Drive Fatigued

Take regular breaks, get another driver to relieve you, or get off the road and find a safe place to rest.

### 10. Never Drive Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs impair both judgment and reaction time. There is no safe limit for drinking before driving. Many prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs cause dizziness or sleepiness, and can slow reaction time. If your medication has a warning, take it seriously – have someone else drive or find another way to your destination.

