

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2019

SAFETY

Unfamiliar Roadways

Because Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers often travel to new cities and towns, they may be unfamiliar with the roadway and feel compelled to read a map or directions while driving. The Large Truck Crash Causation Study (LTCCS) reported that 22 percent of large-truck crashes occurred when CMV drivers were unfamiliar with the roadway.

Below are some tips that will help you maintain your route and prevent a crash while driving on unfamiliar roads.

TIP #1: Review Maps and Plan Your Route Before Driving

Be sure to plan your driving route before getting behind the wheel so you can keep your schedule and prevent distractions that may occur while trying to read a map or directions. You may use electronic devices, such as a navigation system, to aid you when you are unfamiliar with the roadway. However, remember to use technology appropriately (pull safely to the side of the roadway or stop and take a break), otherwise it can be a source of distraction.

Did You Know? When transporting hazardous materials, remember that most states and localities have route restrictions and/or designated routes. You must carry a written copy of your route plan, and you must follow that plan if you are carrying Division 1.1, 1.2 or 1.3 explosives.

Did You Know? An independent CMV driver from Philadelphia received a \$17,751 traffic ticket for exceeding the road weight limit when he got lost in a suburban neighborhood of East Whiteland Township, PA. He was unfamiliar with the area and had difficulty following the directions that were provided to him.

TIP #2: Do Not Suddenly Change Your Direction of Travel

If you miss a turn or an exit, pass the turn and find a safe way to change direction. Do not take shortcuts. Trying to suddenly correct a missed turn or exit may result in you performing an illegal or unsafe maneuver which may threaten your safety and the safety of the vehicles around you.

Did You Know? From 2004 to 2007 almost 50,000 moving violations were classified as an improper turn or an improper lane change.

TIP #3: Signal Your Intentions

Use turn signals first to indicate your intent to change lanes, next visually scan for adjacent traffic and road hazards, and then execute a safe lane change. By signaling your intentions well in advance, you will be in a safer position to communicate with the surrounding drivers and you will be able to safely execute the desired driving maneuver.

Did You Know? A recent study reported that there are approximately 630,000 lane-change crashes annually (including both large trucks and passenger vehicles).

Information Provided By: FMCSA

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REGULATORY

Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse

In just over nine months, the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse is scheduled to go into effect. Signed into law in 2016, the Clearinghouse will serve as a central database where drivers' drug and alcohol violations are stored.

The FMCSA recently issued an update on the status of the Clearinghouse, confirming that it's scheduled to go into effect on January 6, 2020.

What Information Will be Available?

The Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse will contain all CDL driver drug and alcohol program violations, including:

- A positive drug test result
- Reporting to duty for a safety-sensitive function with a blood alcohol concentration of at least 0.04
- Reporting to duty for a safety-sensitive function while under the influence of any drug that is prohibited under Part 40 of the regulations (unless prescribed by a doctor)
- Refusing to submit to a required drug or alcohol test

- Alcohol use during, or within four hours, of performing a safety-sensitive function
- Alcohol use within eight hours of a post-accident alcohol test

The Impact

For employers, the Clearinghouse will provide greater transparency into a driver's drug and alcohol use while driving a commercial motor vehicle. A driver working for multiple carriers may get a drug or alcohol violation at one company, but unless they disclose the information to their other employers, they'll have no way good way of knowing that the violation occurred. Once the Clearinghouse goes into effect, however, that will no longer be the case.

For drivers, it means that any violation they receive will be recorded and visible to current and future employers – something that isn't always the case now. Because drivers can query the database themselves, they'll also be able to see what information is currently available about them in the Clearinghouse – as well as select a Substance Abuse Professional if they need one.

Information Provided By: American Trucking Associations