

# 15 Ways to Keep Yourself Safe On and Off the Road

Truck driving can be dangerous. In 2017, truck drivers had the largest number of fatal occupational injuries (840), according to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. Follow these 15 tips to keep yourself safe on and off the road:

## Before You Leave

- 1. Plan your route.** Know where you’re headed, where you might stop along the way, where you’ll encounter heavy traffic, and where you might need to make a detour.
- 2. Complete a pre-trip inspection.** Take 15 minutes to check your truck’s general condition, fluid levels, tires, lights, brakes, gauges and controls.
- 3. Buckle up.** Don’t leave without putting on your seat belt. Thirty percent of truck drivers killed in crashes were partially or totally ejected from their vehicles, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

## When You’re Driving

- 4. Watch for dangers.** Scan ahead 15 seconds (one-quarter mile on an interstate or one to two blocks in cities) for traffic issues, work zones and other dangers.
- 5. Check your mirrors.** Look at them every eight to 10 seconds and watch for vehicles in your blind spots.
- 6. Limit lane changes.** If you do change lanes, use your turn signals and brakes to alert other drivers.
- 7. Keep an eye on the sky.** Watch the weather and slow down when needed due to road conditions (snow, rain, ice) or layout (tight curves, mountainous terrain).
- 8. Slow down in work zones.** Obey all signs and speed limits, watch for road crews, maintain extra following distance and be prepared to stop.



- 9. Avoid distractions.** Truckers and bus drivers are 23.2 times more likely to be involved in a crash, near-crash or lane deviation while texting, says the FMCSA.
- 10. Steer clear of aggressive drivers.** If you see other drivers tailgating, making unsafe lane changes, failing to signal or speeding, get out of their way. Stay relaxed. Don’t make eye contact. Ignore any rude gestures.

## When You Stop

- 11. Park only in well-lit areas.**
- 12. Lock your truck** and secure your cargo and any valuables.
- 13. Be alert.** Watch for any suspicious activity at or around your truck, and don’t walk between trailers at a truck stop.
- 14. Inspect your vehicle** so you’re ready for the next leg of your trip.
- 15. Get sleep.** Sleeping seven to nine hours a night will keep you refreshed.