

SAFETY AND SAFE DRIVING AS A PROFESSIONAL COMMERCIAL TRUCK DRIVER

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Safety is one of the most important things all professional commercial truck drivers should keep in their minds at all times and as well as making safety first, the most important aspect of their daily driving practices on a regular basis every time they get behind the wheel to drive as drivers that are new to the commercial driving industry, have no idea of the huge responsibility they have on their shoulders when it comes to being a safe driver on the road, as well as a productive driver for the companies that they drive for.

When new drivers enter the professional commercial truck driving industry do not fully understand their responsibility when it comes to being safe on the road, as well as being a productive driver for the company that they drive for, can possibly, and sometimes lead to very unfortunate, but preventable incidents on our roadways, and this could lead to drivers performing maneuvers in certain areas, not suited for these maneuvers, and there may also be posted signage that such maneuvers are not only prohibited, but are illegal as well, however, the driver will perform these maneuvers with total inattention to the posted signs, due to the distractions of the circumstance they now find themselves in, or they may simply disregard the posted roadway markings that prohibits such maneuvers with certain types of commercial vehicles anyway.

Some examples of such maneuvers, utilizing a commercial vehicle, where the maneuvers do not have sufficient room to be carried out safely, and, or, these types of maneuvers are strictly prohibited by law, thus, they are illegal to perform in that location. Other locations would be at raised railway crossings, divided roadway intersections, cul-de-sac neighborhoods, and dead-end streets and alleyways, and anywhere a driver attempts to try to make U turns, or simply backing back up a one-way single lane street they entered.

When drivers find themselves in these types of situations, and, or predicaments, they may even possibly make the situation worse by becoming anxious, and nervous about the very situation that they are in, attempting to correct the situation, and unwittingly making their circumstance even harder to correct, which in effect, may even require a law enforcement officer to assist them with their efforts to correct the situation, and reducing the chance for any property damage, and, or injury to pedestrians, or any other individuals in their immediate area.

There are many reasons for drivers to become an unsafe driver such as not knowing the area that they are driving in, which could be due to improper trip planning, inattention to drive time management, i.e., their allotted HOS, (HOURS OF SERVICE). For example, not paying attention to how much time they have left that day to drive, thus they become rushed to pick up or deliver a load, having multiple entries to a pickup and deliver their load to the location provided to them by their fleet team, or the customer, being in need of personal hygiene or bodily function needs, and many other distractions can become a factor that may come into play which creates the opportunity for the driver to become an unsafe driver.

As a professional commercial truck driver, being a safe driver on the road should always be the first thing considered prior to making any trip planning commitments. Professional commercial drivers must always ensure that the equipment they are using to pick up and deliver loads are in roadworthy condition, meaning, they must ensure that the equipment has been properly pre-inspected to ensure there are no mechanical issues with that unit prior to getting that unit out on the road which is a standard practice that must be adhered to on a regular basis, and is a requirement by The Department of Transportation as a part of the drivers daily safety pre and post trip equipment inspections and they are signed off on by the driver at the end of every working shift and drivers should also complete an enroute inspection as well every 100 miles, whenever the unit has been parked for more the one hour, or overnight, which would be considered a start work shift pre-inspection anyway if the driver has been parked overnight

After verifying that the equipment that is to be used for picking up and delivering any loads, a well-rounded well thought out trip plan must then follow prior to heading out to pick up or deliver a load particularly if there are hazardous materials involved as these types of loads require a specific route that need to be taken, they also require very specific documentations, and markings on the unit that such materials will be shipped in. Therefore, it is vital to know exactly where you will be picking up and delivering to avoid such situations that will or may place you in an area where you are not legally allowed to be in, or you will have a very difficult time picking up and or delivering that load on time and without incident.

There are some very good tools to use to ensure that you get to your location safely and without incident whether you are picking up your load and or delivering your load, for example, as you are completing your trip planning, it would be beneficial to use such tools as Google Earth, Google Maps, and even reaching out to the shipper or the receiver to verify the correct pick up or delivery address, and which is the correct entrance to the facility in which to enter from or exit from, this way you are assure that you are entering and exiting from the correct street and or highway which will drastically reduce any Chances that you will find yourself in an area where you are not legally and safely allowed to be in and your loads get picked up and delivered on time without incident.

As a professional commercial truck driver, you also want to make sure that you are not a distracted driver, distractions and becoming distracted while driving generally are the major causes for drivers ending up in areas where they can potentially become an unsafe driver. Distractions and becoming distracted can take on many forms and you as the professional commercial driver must be aware of these incidents that could potentially become a distraction to you as you are driving.

You want to make sure that All of your physical functional needs have been met, if you have a pet on board as many drivers do, you also want to make sure that their functional needs have been met thus they will not be a distraction to you as you are driving, you want to make sure that you have the exact location and the correct address and entries and exits for the shipper and the receiver prior to starting your trip, you also want to make sure that your unit is fully fueled as there may be delays due to weather, road construction, accidents on the road as well as rush hour traffic and the various time zones that you may be driving through.

It is also a good idea as well as best practice, to reach out to your fleet team at the company that you are driving for so that they can assist you with any additional information that you may need about the pickup and delivery of the low during your pre trip process as they will generally have additional information specific to the pickup and delivery that they have assigned you to. You may even find that you have more time to pick up and deliver this load which in effect, takes a great deal of pressure off you as a driver which ultimately helps to reduce your level of stress as there will be other stress related circumstances that comes with being a professional commercial driver, and the less stress and distractions you have as a professional commercial truck driver, the safer you will be as a professional commercial truck driver on the road with other drivers you are sharing the road with.

Remember, safety is paramount, safety is your responsibility as a professional commercial truck driver, and you are held to a higher standard of driving than regular drivers on the road which means it is your responsibility to ensure you are practicing safe driving at every step of the way, when you are behind the wheel driving even in your personal vehicle, those rules still apply, because you now have a commercial driver's license not a regular driver's license, and you are expected to perform professionally and safely at all times and always check with your companies safety department to make sure that you are following all of your company's driver safety policies and procedures.

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