

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



Keep Up the Good Work

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According to the 2016 NPTC Benchmarking Report, private fleets reported a DOT Recordable crash rate of 0.86 crashes per million miles, up from the 0.59 crashes per million miles reported in the past two years. This crash rate is roughly two times better than the industry average according to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) officials. For instance, figures from 2014, the last year for which safety statistics are available from the Department of Transportation, show:

- Some 3,978 large trucks and buses were involved in fatal crashes, a 5% decrease from 2013. From 2013 to 2014, large truck and bus fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by all motor vehicles decreased by 4%.
- There was a 33% decrease in the number of fatal crashes involving large trucks or buses between 2004 and 2009, followed by an increase of 20% between 2009 and 2013. From 2013 to 2014, the number of fatal crashes involving large trucks or buses decreased by 4.5%.
- The number of injury crashes involving large trucks or buses decreased steadily from 95,000 in 2004 to 60,000 in 2009 (a decline of 37%). This decline was followed by an increase of 55% from 2009 to 2014.
- From 2013 to 2014, the number of large trucks involved in fatal crashes decreased by 5%, from 3,921 to 3,744, and the rate of large trucks involved in fatal crashes per 100 million miles traveled declined 6%.
- The number of large trucks involved in injury crashes increased by 21%, from 73,000 to 88,000, and the large truck involvement rate in injury crashes increased by 21%.
- The number of large trucks involved in property damage only crashes increased by 31%, from 265,000 to 346,000, and the large truck involvement rate in property damage only crashes increased by 29%.
- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by large trucks increased by 1.5%.

The bottom line is that the performance of the private fleet community – and each of our drivers – is outstanding, and even more impressive considering all the congestion, deteriorating road conditions, and driver distractions with which we have to contend in today's day-to-day driving environment. However, the statistics still provide the grim reality that too many people are being hurt or killed on our nation's highways. More can and should be done. Break down those millions of safe driving miles into driving each day and every mile safely. To drive each mile safely follow the following practices.

- **Be prepared.** Show up for work well-rested and focused on continuing to deliver exceptional safety and service. Don't bring the stresses from your life into the cab.
- **Pre-trip.** Know where you're going, understand the road conditions and the weather conditions and take your pre-trip vehicle inspection seriously.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Let your family know that you will not be looking at your cell phone while you drive. Keep your attention focused on driving conditions and not on your cell phone or snacks in the cab.
- **Fasten your seat belt.** Make a daily commitment to arrive alive.
- **Long distance scan.** When we're walking, if we look two seconds ahead, we will avoid running into walls. In a truck, the scan must be 16 seconds ahead, or as far down the road as possible.
- **Get the big picture.** Good drivers need to anticipate and plan for events that could occur in the next mile.
- **Keep your eyes moving.** Don't become fixated on one area. Be fully engaged in your environment and what's going on around you. Scan every two seconds left and right, front and back of the cab.
- **Leave yourself an out.** Always anticipate poor driving decisions and avoid being surprised or trapped. Think about your best possible escape route or options at all times.
- **Make them see you.** When driving situation, other motorists often don't register your presence until they make eye contact with you. Don't assume they have.

Remember to drive the next mile safely. Then repeat for the next mile. And so on.

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.