

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



School's Out! Summer's Here! Be Ready!

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School's out. Vacations are on. More people are flocking to the great outdoors to take advantage of the warm weather, longer daylight hours, and not having to prepare for school the following morning. Summer is here and with it comes the myriad driving challenges including fatigued drivers, more people driving under the influence, more people driving overloaded vehicles in unfamiliar territory. More people (and children) out in communities and using the nation's roadways for walking, playing, riding bikes and the like.

So what is the professional commercial truck driver to do? Here are some "rules of the road," that can help govern our behavior during the summer months and ensure that everyone enjoys their summer!

- Plan your trips to give yourself a little extra time to handle the increased congestion that may occur at unpredictable times and places.
- Be alert. Use extra caution when driving through communities and residential areas.
- Constantly scan the horizon for soccer nets, balls, bikes and the like. Their presence are good indicators that children may be about. And many of these children may not be paying full time and attention to the roads. That means you should! Always expect the unexpected
- On the highways, keep your eyes peeled for swerving or erratic driving behavior that might indicate drowsy or impaired drivers.
- Keep a lookout for automobiles that may be overloaded with vacation gear. They often are unfamiliar with their surroundings and thus are prone to erratic behavior.
- Remember that playground speed limits remain in effect year round. Observe carefully when driving around playgrounds and parks. Small children are less predictable and harder to see than adults.
- Always watch for small children as you're backing up. Walk around your vehicle to make sure no kids or pets are behind it.
- Obey all laws. Slow down if there are children along the road or crossing the street. Come to a full stop at intersections.
- Be predictable. Don't make sudden maneuvers that others, particularly children on foot or on a bicycle, are not expecting.
- Eliminate distractions – music, food, cell phones – in the cab. Keep your entire mind on the road ahead and its surroundings.
- Turn your headlights on. Drive with headlights on in areas with children and pedestrians. The AAA says that the use of headlights can reduce pedestrian accidents by about 25%.
- Don't speed. Your visibility to pedestrians, your ability to see them and your stopping distance all may be greatly impaired by a number of factors so use your common sense and slow down.
- Don't honk at pedestrians or bicyclists. Honking at a child, whether on foot or on a bicycle, is generally not a good idea. The noise could possibly cause the startled child to trip or fall and be in a dangerous position for other approaching traffic.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians. It isn't just courteous, it's the law.



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