

# SAFE DRIVING

# Matters

**MONTLICK &  
ASSOCIATES**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Information and Tips to Protect You and Your Family

## Share the Road Safely with Large Trucks



### **Important Survival Skills for Drivers of Passenger Vehicles!**

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), nearly 400,000 crashes involving large trucks result in about 5,000 fatalities each year in the US. Research shows that as many as 70 percent of those fatalities are caused by the drivers of the passenger vehicles, not the trucks. Following the tips below will help keep you and your family safe while in the vicinity of big rigs and other large trucks.

Trucks make up about eight percent of all vehicles involved in fatal crashes, however, these crashes result in twelve percent of the total number of people killed on our nation's roads and highways. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), a staggering ninety-five percent of the fatalities in these crashes are the occupants of passenger vehicles. To prevent these catastrophic accidents, it is important for all motorists to remember that trucks are not "large cars"-- they accelerate and stop more slowly, and have more blind spots than passenger vehicles.

### **Follow These Safe Practices!**

When in the vicinity of large trucks, it is extremely important to follow these safe driving practices:

- **Pay Attention.** Always search the road ahead when driving and be alert for trucks or other vehicles that have slowed down or stopped in your lane.
- **Slow Down.** Follow speed limits and always slow down in construction zones and when visibility is degraded by environmental conditions such as fog, smoke, rain.
- **Keep Proper Distance.** Never follow a truck too closely. Debris can fall from a truck or be kicked up by its tires. Staying several car lengths behind will give you more time to react in an emergency and will keep you out of the truck driver's blind spot. Remember, if you cannot see the truck driver's mirrors, the truck driver can't see you.
- **Keep Headlights On at Dusk and Dawn.** Turn your headlights on and be especially vigilant when driving at dawn or dusk.



- **Avoid a "Right Turn Squeeze".** A large truck needs extra space to make right hand turns. Never slip in on the right side of a truck while it is turning right. Stay back and allow them to make the turn.
- **Be Patient.** Wait for a safe gap in the traffic before turning left in front of oncoming traffic or when crossing roadways. The truck you see coming probably is moving a lot faster than you think.
- **Never Drink and Drive.** Driving while impaired by alcohol or other drugs is a factor in nearly 40 percent of all fatal crashes.

### **Avoid These Unsafe Practices!**

The FMCSA study warns drivers to avoid additional unsafe practices such as these:

- Pulling into traffic from roadside without accelerating sufficiently;
- Merging improperly, in a manner that causes a truck to maneuver or brake quickly;
- Failing to permit a truck to merge;
- Changing lanes abruptly in front of a truck, or changing lanes in front of a truck, and then braking;
- Cutting in front of a truck for any reason;
- Passing with an insufficient headway, or distance to the oncoming traffic.

Source: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

These are just a few things you can do to protect your family from truck-related injuries. Please visit [Montlick.com](http://Montlick.com) or [HelpKeepKidsSafe.org](http://HelpKeepKidsSafe.org) and click on "Family Safety and Legal Tips," to see our latest safety videos and downloadable materials, and to register for Free Safety Alerts.

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