

# SMART DRIVER<sup>®</sup>

March 2021

## PREVENTING LANE CHANGE CRASHES

Lane change crashes may be prevented if drivers recognize the hazards that increase the likelihood of a lane change crash and take defensive measures to avoid a loss.

Read the information below and ask yourself if there are actions you can take to improve your driving skills and reduce the risk of a lane change crash.

### RECOGNIZE THE HAZARDS:

#### ENVIRONMENT

Increased traffic on the road makes changing lanes more challenging. Construction zones where lanes are closed and force traffic to merge increase the risk of a lane-change crash. Additionally, obstacles in the road such as parked vehicles blocking your lane, may require an unexpected lane change.

#### EQUIPMENT

Tractor-trailers have large blind spots in front, behind, and to the sides of the vehicle. Damaged, missing, or inoperable equipment such as mirrors, turn signals, etc., reduce the driver's visibility. Additionally, mirrors become misaligned due to vibration while driving and need adjustment.

#### PERSONAL BEHAVIOURS

Drivers making frequent lane changes increase the risk of a crash. Speeding and improper following distance reduce a driver's perception and reaction times. This can lead to abrupt lane changes to avoid a rear-end crash. Poor planning and failing to use a turn signal also increase the risk of a crash.

### KNOW THE DEFENSE:

#### CONDUCT A PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

Conduct a thorough pre-trip inspection. Clean mirrors, windows, lights, and reflectors at each stop or as needed. Take the time to properly align the mirrors before each trip.

#### PLAN AHEAD

Program the route into your GPS before leaving. Be mindful of construction, lane closures, etc.

#### MAKE SAFE AND LEGAL LANE CHANGES

- Avoid distractions while driving, such as talking/texting on phone, eating, drinking, etc.
- Stay in one lane as much as possible.
- Maintain proper following distance and be mindful of traffic slowing ahead.
- Make frequent, quick glances to mirrors and windows to monitor the blind spots around the truck.
- Use the turn signal well in advance to warn other drivers of your intent to change lanes.
- Use the Lean and Look method to ensure another vehicle is not in the tractor's right-front blind spot.
- Do not make abrupt lane changes. Move gradually into the adjacent lane.
- Move into the exit or turn lane well in advance. If you miss your exit or turn, continue on and go to the next exit or turn and circle back.

Note: These lists are not intended to be all-inclusive.



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# Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

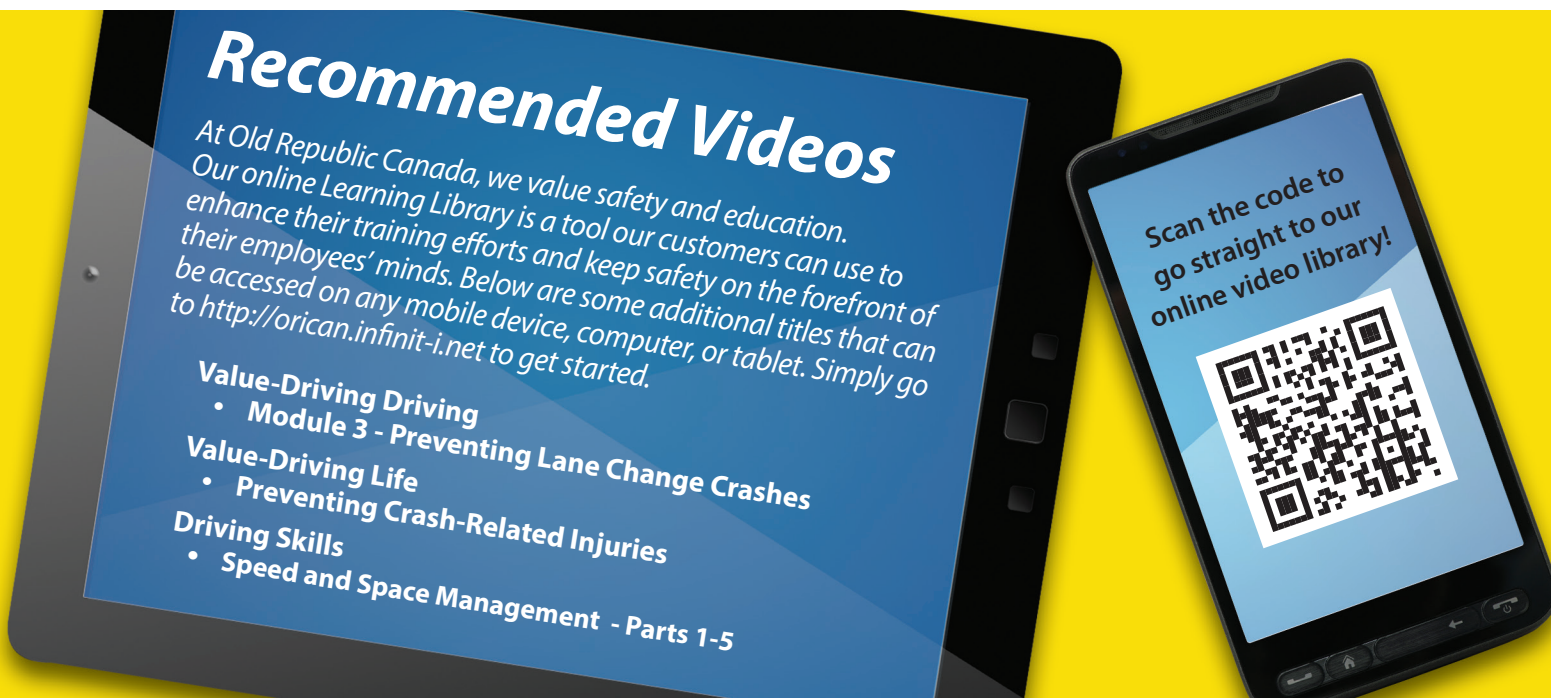
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.*

1. Frequent lane changes create more risk for drivers.
2. If you are using another driver's truck, don't adjust the mirrors.
3. Frequent mirror checks monitor blind spots.
4. Abrupt lane changes can be dangerous.

- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |

Answers:  
1. True  
2. False  
3. True  
4. True



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