

SMART DRIVER[®]

February 2021

HOW TO AVOID PATTERN DRIVING

Every truck driver has a pattern to the way he or she drives. These patterns, or habits, can be good or bad, or more precisely, safe or unsafe.

A driver who integrates safety into all of his or her driving decisions, regardless of the environment, has established a pattern of behaviour that reduces the risk of a crash.

On the flipside, pattern driving refers to practicing unsafe behaviours, such as speeding and tailgating. Pattern driving also can occur when a driver gets too comfortable with his or her route or routines and lets his or her guard down.

This type of pattern driving is common when drivers run dedicated routes to the same customers day after day and become complacent. In this case, complacency becomes a distraction, and the driver loses focus of his or her surroundings and the potential hazards that could lead to a crash.

Read the list of driving patterns below and ask yourself if there are actions you can take to improve your driving skills.

UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOURS:

Do any of the following driving patterns apply to you?

- Talking on the phone or texting while driving
- Blocking the path of oncoming traffic
- Tailgating
- Gawking at passing crash scenes
- Speeding
- Daydreaming while driving
- Making frequent lane changes
- Making U-turns
- Driving while ill or fatigued
- Driving too fast for conditions
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Not wearing a seatbelt

SAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOURS:

AVOID COMPLACENCY

Each day, change your pre-trip inspection routine. If permitted, try new routes to dedicated customers.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Do not drive if taking any medication that can cause drowsiness. To reduce fatigue, get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, and avoid heavy meals. Wear sunglasses and use the visor to reduce sun glare.

OBSERVE PROPER SPEED FOR CONDITIONS

Reduce speed by at least 3-5 kph below the flow of traffic, not to exceed the posted speed limit. Before entering ramps, curves, and turns, reduce speed by at least 15-25 kph below the posted speed limit, or more based on conditions.

REACT PROPERLY TO HAZARDS

Make quick glances to mirrors and return your focus to the road ahead. At the first sign of vehicles slowing in front of you, get off the accelerator and apply controlled braking.

MAINTAIN PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Keep a minimum of six seconds distance behind the vehicle in front, and add one second for each additional hazard, such as snow, freezing rain, sun glare, or black ice, as the hazard presents.

MAINTAIN ONE LANE

Avoid making erratic or unnecessary lane changes. Stay in one lane as much as possible.

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. It is okay to take ramps at the posted speed limit. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 2. Drivers who introduce safety into driving practices reduce the risk of crashes. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 3. Drivers should avoid erratic and unnecessary lane changes. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| 4. If you are ill or fatigued, you should carry on driving if you have hours available. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |

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



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