

# The ExtraMile

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## TIME TO DISCUSS SPRING DRIVING HAZARDS

Spring has returned for most of the country, which means operations staff should take time to remind drivers of the seasonal risks that come with this time of year. Read about the spring-related driving hazards below and commit to completing the “Call to Action” items at the bottom of the page.

### *Adverse Weather*

Spring marks the beginning of warmer temperatures and some of the country’s most dangerous weather systems. Drivers must contend with severe weather hazards, such as thunderstorms, high winds, tornadoes, and flooding. To help protect drivers, operations staff should monitor weather forecasts and communicate these hazards to drivers. If conditions are safe to continue, remind drivers to slow down and increase their following distance to allow more time to stop in the slippery conditions. If conditions become unsafe, encourage drivers to find a safe place to pull over and wait for the storm to pass.

### *Dangerous Road Conditions*

Melting snow and ice, as well as rain, make road conditions slippery. Operations staff should allow drivers to take their time and be extra cautious in adverse driving conditions. Likewise, remind drivers to conduct pre-trip inspections to ensure their vehicles are operating safely, especially brakes and tires. Also, potholes can wreak havoc on equipment. Popping a tire could lead to a loss of control crash and possibly a high-dollar loss. Remind drivers to avoid distractions, like talking or texting on the phone, and be attentive to the road ahead. If a hazard presents itself, advise drivers to react properly, such as by slowing down and staying in one lane.

### *Road Construction*

Road construction is inevitable, but operations staff can help drivers by rerouting them away from construction areas. If a delay occurs, call the receiver on the driver’s behalf to let them know your driver is running behind due to construction traffic and is on the way. This act of kindness will help alleviate your driver’s stress so he/she can remain focused on driving. Also, remind drivers to slow down below the posted speed limit in

construction zones and maintain proper following distance. Workers and equipment may enter the roadway unexpectedly, so drivers should avoid distractions and stay focused on the road ahead.



## CALL TO ACTION

- Communicate adverse weather conditions and road construction areas to drivers.
- Call the shipper/receiver on the driver’s behalf to pass along any delays.
- Remind every driver to conduct a thorough pre-trip vehicle inspection before driving.

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# KNOW THE HAZARDS OF ROLLOVERS

**T**ractor-trailers typically have a high centre of gravity, which makes them susceptible to rollover crashes. The key to preventing a rollover is for drivers to be able to recognize the hazards that increase the likelihood of a crash and apply the appropriate defence measures.

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 rollover crash.



## RECOGNIZE THE HAZARDS

### Environment

Uneven road surfaces can cause cargo to shift and roll the trailer over. High winds can catch a trailer without warning and cause a rollover. Likewise, traffic conditions, such as vehicles stopping suddenly ahead, can cause a driver to react abruptly and lead to a jackknife and possibly a rollover crash.

### Equipment

A truck's high centre of gravity makes it susceptible to rollovers. Likewise, the slosh/surge of liquid commodities or improper load securement can cause cargo shift and roll the trailer over.

### Personal Behaviours

Driving too fast on a ramp, curve, or turn increases the amount of centrifugal force on the trailer; the increased force will push the unit outward and possibly cause a rollover. Overcorrecting

when reacting to a hazard, putting a wheel off the road surface, or hitting a curb can upset the vehicle and cause a rollover.

## KNOW THE DEFENCE

### Observe Proper Speed for Conditions

Reduce speed 2-3 mph below the flow of traffic, not to exceed the posted speed limit. Adjust speed for stability based on vehicle weight and height of load. On ramps and curves, reduce speed by at least 5-10 mph below the posted speed limit or more based on conditions. The speed limit signs on ramps are intended for passenger vehicles.

### Maintain Proper Following Distance

Avoid hard brakes by maintaining a minimum of six seconds following distance. Add one additional second for every hazard present, such as slippery conditions, traffic congestion, and poor visibility.

### Avoid Distractions

Avoid distractions inside or outside of the cab. Be alert for traffic ahead slowing or stopping abruptly. Pre-plan your route and program your GPS before leaving to avoid making changes while driving.

### React Properly to Hazards

At the first sign of centrifugal force pulling the truck to the outside of a ramp or curve, get off the accelerator and apply controlled braking. Avoid overcorrecting in reaction to hazards.

### Conduct a Pre-trip Inspection

Conduct a thorough pre-trip inspection with special emphasis on brakes to ensure they are properly adjusted; and on tires to ensure sufficient tread depth. Ensure the trailer is properly hooked to the tractor. Check load securement at every stop to prevent possible shifting while en route.

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

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# ELECTRONIC DATA RECORDER PRESERVATION DURING TOWING

**A**fter a break down or accident takes place, there may be electronic data stored on your truck or tractor which can assist in determining the break down reason or assist in better understanding what took place leading up to and during an accident. This data is stored on truck and tractor electronic control units (ECU) and the data is known as Electronic Data Recorder (EDR) data. Note: for reference some refer to this as the truck's black box, similar to an airplane.

After an accident, a critical decision must be made regarding whether or not to move the involved vehicles from the accident scene and if so, how to do it. Sometimes, this decision is made for you by the state of the vehicles themselves in that if they have been damaged such that they can no longer be driven, they must be towed. Other times, it may be a busy road with rules in place that accident vehicles must be moved to the shoulder. In some cases, one vehicle may be drivable and the other may not be. If possible, it is best not to move any of the vehicles in order to preserve any potential EDR data.

Sometimes, law enforcement may request that the vehicle be moved if it is drivable. In these cases, it may be worth noting to law enforcement that there may be potentially related electronic data related to an accident that could be overwritten if the vehicle is driven. Law enforcement can then make the decision as to whether or not the vehicle is driven or towed from an accident scene.

For those occasions when a truck or tractor is going to be towed, one of the first and most important steps is to locate and secure the key. If it is in the ignition, remove it. When the key is in the ON position, so are the vehicle's ECU's, meaning that they have the capability to potentially overwrite any of the possibly related EDR data. By securing the key and ensuring that the vehicle is not keyed on during towing will assist in ensuring possible accident related EDR data is preserved.

In addition, if there is a battery shutoff available, it is best to turn this to the OFF position to ensure there is no power to any ECUs. Battery shutoffs are typically found above the battery tray or on the floor of the cab near the left rear of the driver's seat.

The type of EDR data available depends on the specific makeup of a given vehicle. Some vehicles have the capability of recording a last stop record, where data is written every time the vehicle comes to a stop. This record can provide

vehicle speeds, brake and throttle inputs along with other engine data surrounding that last stop. When a tractor is driven from an accident site to a shoulder where it will be towed or driven around a tow or holding lot, this last stop data will be overwritten.

Another, more common type of EDR data available on heavy trucks or tractors is a hard brake record. Typically, these events are triggered when the vehicle speed sensor, typically located near the driveshaft, measures a 7 mph/s or change in speed for the vehicle. Similar data points as found in the last stop record are found in the hard brake records. If the tractor needs to be driven from an accident site, it is best to drive as short a distance as possible to avoid creating any new hard brake events. This can be particularly tricky in adverse weather, such as snow, to try not to lock up the brakes.

When a tractor is being towed, it is best practice to have the driveshaft disconnected and removed. By removing the driveshaft, it prevents potential damage to the transmission or axle differentials from gears turning while the vehicle is off. Disconnecting the driveshaft also helps reduce the risk of overwriting any accident related data that is measured from the wheel speed sensor.

If possible, try and take a photograph of the vehicles at rest before they are moved. When taking a photograph try to include some context as to where the photograph was taken by including a landmark like a building or sign to help triangulate the rest positions of the respective vehicles.

*Submitted by:  
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