

Tips for Driving Safely Around Large Trucks or Buses

Large trucks or buses (commercial motor vehicles, or CMVs) have operating limitations such as large blind spots, long stopping distances, and limited maneuverability that make it essential for other vehicles to put extra focus on safety.

Fortunately, you can take simple actions to avoid experiencing or causing problems involving trucks and buses by following these Ten Rules of the Road.

1. Stay out of the “No Zones”

Large trucks and buses have huge blind spots – or No Zones – around the front, back and sides of the vehicle.

If you can't see the driver in the truck's side mirror, assume that the driver can't see you.

Don't drive in a blind spot – slow down or move ahead to stay visible.

Be particularly careful when merging near a truck or bus. You may likely be in a blind spot.

2. Pass Safely

Make sure you can see the driver in the mirror before passing. Signal clearly, then move into the left lane and accelerate so that you can get past the truck or bus safely and promptly. Don't linger in the blind spot. Make sure the truck or bus is visible in your rear

mirror before you pull in front; give it extra space. Avoid passing trucks and buses on a downgrade where they tend to pick up speed. Never pass from the right lane.

When a bus or truck is passing you, stay to the right and slow down slightly. Giving the driver room to pass safely helps get you out of the blind spot quicker. Remember to give trucks and buses plenty of space to merge in front of you when coming off ramps or changing lanes.

3. Don't Cut It Close

Cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous, but it's especially dangerous to “cut off” a commercial bus or truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you're likely to be in a blind spot so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you're visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the amount of time it takes to stop

4. Stay Back

Tailgating a truck or bus presents added dangers. First, it puts you in a blind spot—or No Zone. Then, because trucks are so high off the ground, if you fail to stop in time (or get hit from behind) your vehicle could slide under the truck, with devastating results.





Getting too close when stopped is also dangerous – particularly on an upgrade, where a bus or truck might roll back.

5. Anticipate Wide Turns

Buses and trucks require extra turning room – they swing wide, or may even initiate a turn from a middle (rather than far right) lane.

If a truck or bus has its turn signal on never try to squeeze by it or get between the vehicle and the curb.

When you stop in an intersection never “block the box” or stop in front of the line, as buses and trucks require that space to complete turns safely.

6. Be Patient

Trucks and buses have operating restrictions, and sometimes use technology like speed limiters.

Honking, driving aggressively, or weaving through traffic won't make the trip faster, but can cause dangerous distractions and crashes.

7. Buckle Up

Wearing your seat belt is one of the most important things that you and your passengers can do to save your lives. A seatbelt may keep you in your seat and help you maintain control of your vehicle. The safest place for kids is in the backseat, buckled up or in a car seat. Be safe and always buckle up!



8. Stay Focused

If you need to attend to a text, a call, GPS, or an app, get off the road and stop driving. Driving distracted can be as dangerous as driving impaired. Even eating while driving or adjusting your radio can take your eyes off the road long enough for a crash to occur.

Don't underestimate the speed (or overestimate the distance) of a truck or bus particularly when making turns, merging, or changing lanes.

9. Don't Drive Fatigued

Take regular breaks, get another driver to relieve you, or get off the road and find a safe place to rest.

10. Never Drive Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs impair both judgment and reaction time. There is no safe limit for drinking before driving. Many prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs cause dizziness or sleepiness, and can slow reaction time. If your medication carries a warning, take it seriously – have someone else drive or find another way to your destination.

Get more safety tips and resources to share by visiting the Our Roads, Our Safety website: www.sharetheroadsafely.gov.

