



Sharing the Road

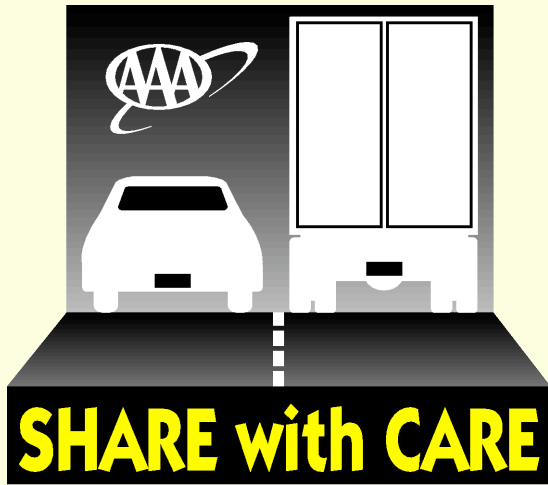
AAA is committed to providing information that helps ensure the safety, security and peace of mind of all travelers.



AAA's Guide for Motorists and Truckers to Safely Share the Road



Produced by AAA Public Affairs
1000 AAA Drive, Heathrow, FL 32746
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Sharing the Road

Large trucks play a critical role in the nation's economy, and their numbers are likely to increase dramatically in coming years. The need to safely share the road has never been greater.

As part of a national highway safety campaign, AAA plans to focus attention on safety education.

Motorists and truck drivers must share the road every day, but how much do we really know about safely doing so? Let's find out.

Motorists' Quiz

True or False? If you can see a truck's mirrors, the truck driver can see you.

True. If you can see a truck's mirrors, the driver *should* be able to see you. But whether or not he or she *does* see you is another question. As a motorist, you should maneuver your vehicle into a position where a truck driver can clearly see it. Remember, the driver might not see your vehicle in certain locations. The diagram on the inside of this brochure highlights a truck's blind spots.

When passing a large truck, allow yourself:

- a. 15 seconds.
- b. 30 seconds.
- c. Plenty of time.

The answer is c. Allow yourself plenty of time when passing a truck. At highway speeds, it can take up to 30 seconds to safely pass a truck. When you pass, do so quickly. Don't continuously drive alongside a truck — you're in the truck driver's blind spot. After passing, change lanes only when you can see the truck's headlights or front grill in your rearview mirror.

To maintain a safe distance, motorists should follow trucks at a distance of:

- a. At least four seconds.
- b. At least four car lengths.
- c. Two seconds.

The answer is a. At least four seconds are needed to keep you out of the truck's rear blind spot, and here's an easy method to compute the correct distance: As a truck passes a stationary object alongside the road, start counting, one thousand one, one thousand two, etc. You should reach one thousand four just as your front bumper reaches the same object. If you arrive before one thousand four you are traveling too close to the back of the truck.

At an intersection, a truck immediately in front of you is signaling to make a right turn. Your smartest move is to:

- a. Go around the truck on the left.
- b. Stay put.
- c. Go around the truck on the right.

The answer is b. Trucks make wide right turns. It may look like trucks are going straight or turning left when they are actually making a right turn. This technique — combined with blind spots alongside the trailer — makes trying to pass a turning truck a dangerous maneuver. Truck drivers can't see cars squeezing in between them and the curb. Stay put, and give truck drivers plenty of room to turn.

A truck driver's blind spot:

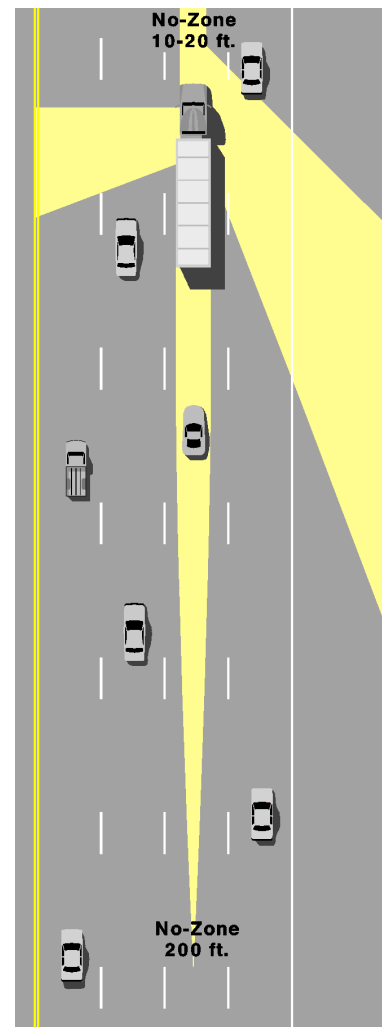
- a. Extends to 100 feet behind the truck.
- b. Extends to the front and back and left and right sides of the truck.
- c. Stops at the end of the truck.

The answer is b. Every truck has four blind spots or "no-zones" that every motorist should avoid. Your vehicle is invisible in these no-zones.

The front no-zone is 10- to- 20 feet in front of the truck cab.

The rear no-zone extends to 200 feet behind a truck — that's two-thirds the length of a football field.

Regarding side no-zones, the message is don't "hang out" on either side of trucks. Trucks have large blind spots on both sides — much larger than the blind spots you experience driving your car. If you are in one of the blind spots, you're in big trouble if that driver swerves or changes lanes for any reason.



Safety Tips for Truck Drivers

1. Double-check your mirrors before turning right. Motorists may not know that you need to swing wide to the left to make a right turn and they may not realize that you are turning.
2. Signal early and often when maneuvering through and around intersections. In heavy traffic, motorists who drive alongside the truck may not see your turn signal. Signaling early gives motorists the information they need to decide whether or not to pull alongside you.
3. Don't tailgate. It makes motorists uneasy to have 80,000 pounds of truck on their rear bumper.
4. Leave extra space between your truck and cars around you whenever possible. Many motorists don't know how long it takes a truck to stop or how much room you need to pass safely.
5. Use proper parking areas when pulling off the road. Trucks are four times more likely to be rear-ended than cars. It is especially important to use designated parking areas when possible. If and when you can't do this, pull completely off the road and set out flares, safety triangles or other devices to enhance your visibility.

Safety Tips for Motorists

1. Be aware that trucks create wind gusts. Keep both hands on the wheel when you pass a truck or when a truck passes you.
2. Leave plenty of room between you and a truck when coming to a stop on a hill. Trucks may roll back as the driver takes his or her foot off the brake.
3. Don't speed up when a truck is passing you. Instead, stay to the right and slow down slightly. Let the truck pass you. This will give the truck driver plenty of room to pass safely and get you out of the truck's blind spot faster.
4. If a truck driver is signaling to change lanes, give him or her space. An average truck changing lanes at highway speeds needs an eight second gap (700 feet) — that's the length of 2 1/2 football fields.

Truck drivers are professionally trained, and it is their job to drive safely. But motorists need to take special care when driving around trucks.

We hope the safety tips in this brochure will help all drivers share the road more safely.