



Are You Truck Aware?

In the past few years, the road safety record of heavy trucks has improved in Ontario. Despite this fact, in 2017, one in five road fatalities were the result of a crash involving a large truck. 2017 data also reveals that 73% of the time large truck drivers were found to be driving properly at the moment of the crash, compared to 46% of other drivers in the same collision.

Because of their weight, a crash involving a large truck will most likely result in serious injuries to the driver of the other vehicle particularly. Educating yourself to understand the realities and constraints of heavy trucks can lead to increased safety for all road users.

Blind spots are areas of the road that cannot be seen in the rear-view mirrors or through the windows, and therefore prevent the driver from seeing other road users. Every vehicle has blind spots but their size and location vary according to the type of vehicle. In general, the taller and longer the vehicle, the larger the blind spots.

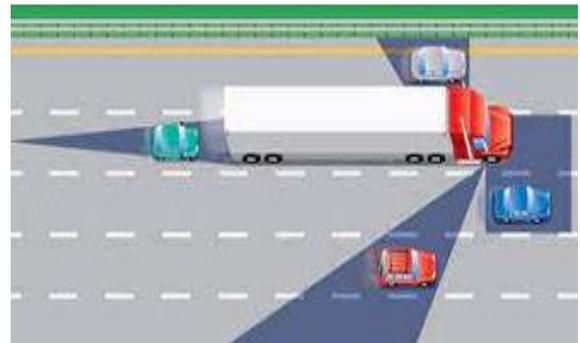


Figure 1: Large truck's blind spots

Drivers: Be Truck Aware

Be especially careful when driving near heavy trucks, their blind spots are much bigger than those of a car. Some large trucks such as buses and vehicles with auxiliary equipment (e.g. snowblowers, snowplows, etc.) can have additional blind spots.

The two most common collision types between cars and large trucks on provincial highways are side swipe and truck rear-ending. Not surprisingly, large trucks' blind spots may contribute to both these collision types. The blind spots of large trucks are very different from what most drivers are familiar with, so they may not know that truck drivers cannot look over their shoulders to clear a blind spot like a passenger car.

Be aware that commercial trucks have large blind spots at the front and the back (see figure 1) and avoid driving and staying in their blind spots. Leave plenty of space and avoid merging too soon into the lane in front of large trucks and commercial buses.

In traffic, many drivers see an opening as an opportunity to merge right in front of commercial trucks, when in fact the truck driver is leaving the appropriate space to react and stop gradually. Cutting in too close in front of another vehicle is always dangerous, but it is especially dangerous to cut in front of a commercial bus or truck. If you move in quickly from either side, you are likely to be in a blind spot so the driver may not see you in time. Even if you are visible, the vehicle may not be able to slow down quickly enough to avoid a crash because of the amount of time it takes to stop. Drivers need to remember that with more weight comes longer stopping distances (see figure 2).

Pedestrians and Cyclists: Know Your Responsibilities Around Heavy Trucks

Knowledge of truck's blind spots is also important for those walking or cycling close to commercial trucks and buses, as you want to stay away from their blind spots and make sure you have been seen.

Avoid walking behind a truck and remember that, unlike cars or city buses, large trucks also have a very big blind spot at the front, so pedestrians should avoid crossing too close in front of heavy trucks.

If you can't establish eye contact with the driver of a large truck, you should assume they don't see you and may not hear you even if you were to use your voice to get noticed.

It is recommended that cyclists leave plenty of room if you are stopped behind a large vehicle. When the driver of a large vehicle releases the brakes after being stopped, the vehicle may roll back. Cyclist should also never attempt to pass a large truck on the right since large trucks will often need to make wider turns than other vehicles when turning right.



Figure 2: The cyclist is staying back and positioned to be seen, well outside the truck's rear blind spot.



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