

TRUCK TALK

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Summer Driving Tips

As the peak driving/vacation season begins, there are a number of different hazards which present themselves to us as professional drivers.

- Watch for increased volume of traffic. Some of this traffic will be families on vacation and others who normally do not drive long distances. Plus, a lost motorist can potentially be the most dangerous of all; distracted, driving in unfamiliar territory, and probably on a cell phone.
- Road construction and repair is always on the upswing in the summer season. Be prepared for and PLAN for construction delays. Most state's Department of Transportation has a web listing for the major construction sites within the state. Certainly checking these sites before heading out affords the professional driver an opportunity to take a different or less congested route.
- Increase your focus on your blind spots. Non-professional drivers will most likely not be aware of your blind spots let alone how to avoid them.
- Once again in the construction zone, be prepared for the driver in a hurry that waits until the last possible second then merges in front of you, cutting you off. You have seen it happen; you know it is going to happen again. Be prepared and act as the professional you are.
- Slow down, buckle up, and get off the phone. Cell phones are a proven distraction, and it is best to limit their use and be in compliance with your company's cell phone usage policy. If a call needs to be made, it is best to make it when you are off the highway and parked in a safe place.
- Be particularly aware of increased motorcycle traffic. These small vehicles are hard to see at best and the summer riding season produces large numbers of motorcyclists on vacation. Some are experienced riders, but a lot of them may be on their first road trip.
- Make sure you get plenty of rest before beginning your tour of duty. This along with a healthy diet and regular exercise will help you to stay alert.
- Slow moving agricultural equipment is much more common on the highways during the summer and peak planting and harvesting seasons. These vehicles can be anything from small 4-wheeled tanker trailers to all wheel drive farm tractors pulling large plows and cultivators. In addition, over-dimension loads of hay and harvesting equipment can present challenges on two lane roads.

Summertime requires a much higher level of concentration on the part of professional drivers – your experience, patience, and skill are what set you apart.