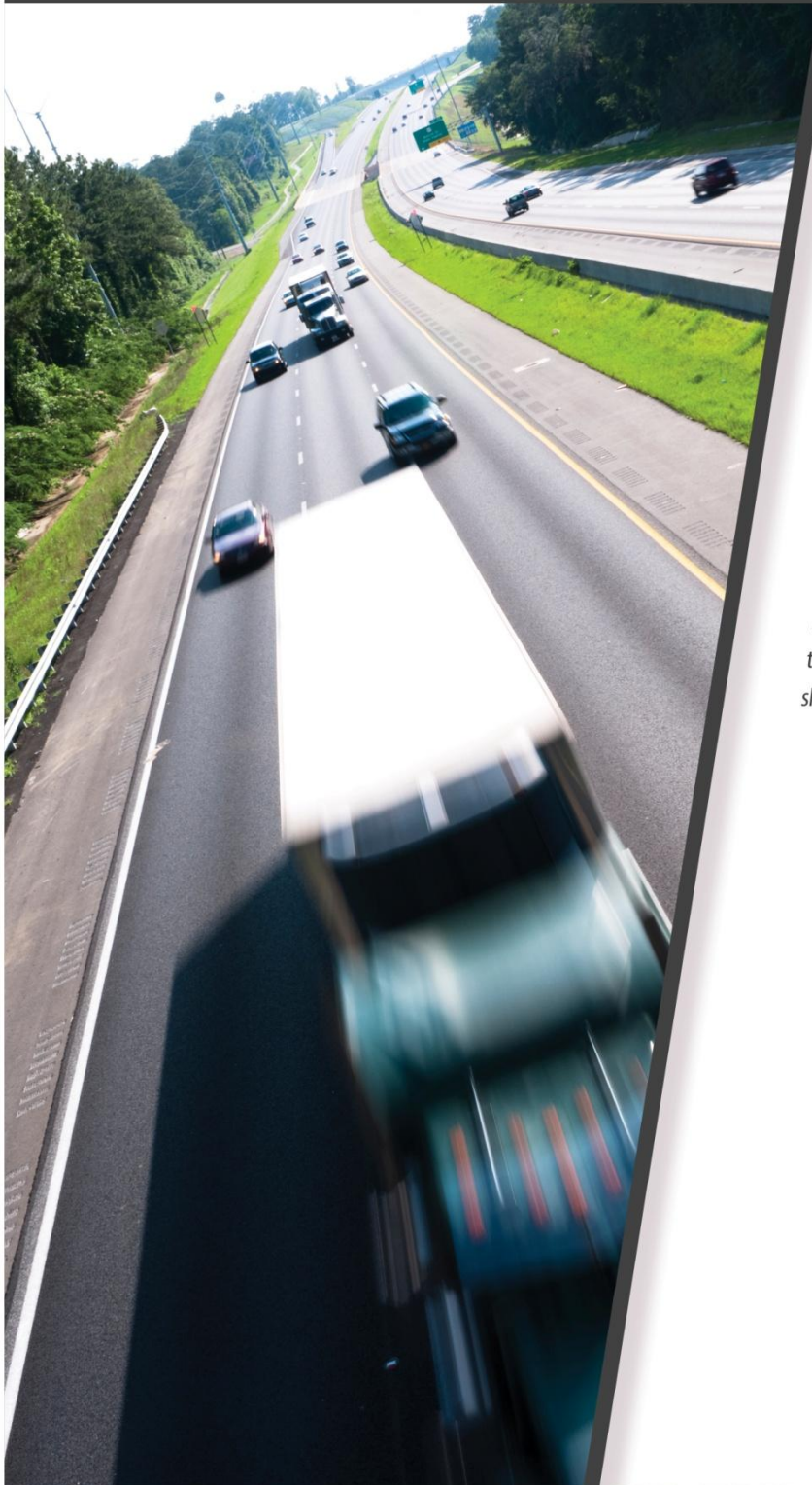


ACCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES



Driving in Heavy Traffic

The Accident Countermeasures program was created to provide a way for our company and our most important asset, the drivers, to cover important safety topics in a meaningful and accessible manner. This program allows you, the driver, to study safety material and learn desirable information at a time most convenient to you.

Please take the time to read through the material, study the pictures, and then answer the questions at the end of this handout. Your completed answer sheet should then be turned in to receive credit for completing this program.

Prepared by:

Safety Management Services Company

A Cottingham & Butler Company



Cottingham & Butler

ACCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES

Safety Management Services Company's Accident Countermeasures Program

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Driving in Heavy Traffic

Heavy traffic is a concern for most drivers. There is an increased risk of a collision as well as an increase in stress. Traffic congestion requires you to have an additional awareness of your surroundings and driving conditions. However, practicing some general safe driving guidelines can help prevent a crash and allow you to make it to your destination.

With respect to heavy traffic, the following best practices should be implemented to avoid a crash:

- **Remove Distractions.** Limit your in-cab distractions, especially while driving in heavy traffic as other drivers are more likely to become impatient and drive erratically. Hands-free calling, the radio, the conversation with your passenger, etc., all can wait until the driving conditions have become less hectic.
- **Surveillance.** Collisions in heavy traffic are often a result of attempting to complete a maneuver (such as passing or turning at an intersection) and either failing to look in the appropriate place, or looking but not seeing another vehicle. A study, Large-Truck Crash Causation Study (LTCCS), conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), found that 14 percent of large-truck crashes occurred due to inadequate surveillance.
 - Check your mirrors, at least every 5 to 8 seconds, and then quickly return your attention to the road ahead. Frequently scanning will help keep you aware of changing traffic conditions. Checking your mirrors not only allows you to notice other vehicles but also helps with noticing tire damage or loose securement devices (straps, chains, etc.).
- **Blind Spot Awareness.** Other drivers on the road are probably not familiar with CMV's blind spots and how their entire vehicle can become hidden from view. The key to collision prevention is maintaining vigilance of vehicles that pass in and out of your blind spots.
- **Defensive Driving.** In short, defensive driving is operating your vehicle to avoid collisions due to the actions of others. This requires speed and space management along with staying alert. The FMCSA found 83 percent of traffic events between heavy and light vehicles were initiated by the drivers of light vehicles.

- A large part of practicing defensive driving is looking ahead to respond to changing conditions. Look at least 15 seconds in front of you. 15 seconds is equivalent to about ¼ of a mile on the interstate and 1.5 blocks in the city.
- **Speed and Space Management.** Do not just go with the flow of traffic. Driving moderately slower than the vehicles around you does not increase the risk of a collision, and will allow you a better opportunity to avoid a crash. As speed increases, so does the distance needed to come to a stop or to take an escape route. Adequate space is necessary to prevent rear-ending other vehicles that abruptly stop.
- **Communicate.** Make the assumption that others are not paying attention. With that in mind, communicate your intentions early and clearly by using your turn signal or flashing your brake lights. When communication fails, give the other driver the right-of-way. When it comes to driving safely, it's not the principle, but the outcome, that counts.
- **Pull Over.** There will be times when continuing to drive in heavy traffic is not worth the risk. Stress and anxiety can negatively impact your driving performance. Use your best judgment with regards to the weather such as a hard rain and road conditions such as snow and ice. Taking a rest break to cool your head or wait out the weather can mean avoiding the next multivehicle interstate pileup.

Heavy Traffic Collision #1

Date and Time: 12/13/2013; 11:00 AM

Location: Maywood, IL

Weather: Cold and Partly Cloudy

Road Conditions: Dry asphalt, interstate, heavy traffic

Parties Involved: Dry van tractor-trailer and midsized sedan

Description of Accident:

CMV driver, Rick, was driving in center lane westbound on I-290 at around 11 a. m. He felt the truck vibrate up and down. At first, he thought he had blown a tire. He then saw a passenger car was making contact with the front, right side of his truck. The car and Rick pulled over to the side of the road where they exchanged information. Rick claims the other driver drove his car into his tractor. The other driver claims he doesn't know what happened. Rick saw a cell phone on the seat of the passenger car leading him to believe the driver was distracted and drove into his lane.

Report Damages:

The sedan's driver-side rear tire was blown and rim destroyed. Vehicle also incurred body damage. Driver of the sedan is claiming damages in the amount of \$6,753.83.

DRIVING IN HEAVY TRAFFIC

Rick's tractor passenger-side steer tire was scraped along with the vehicle's bumper. The steer tire needed an alignment and a local commercial shop quoted a repair estimate of \$1,096.03.



DRIVING IN HEAVY TRAFFIC

Name: _____ Date: _____

QUESTION PAGE

Please return this page to your safety department to receive credit for course completion.

1. In the collision example that occurred in heavy traffic, how could the CMV driver have contributed to this collision?

2. While driving in heavy traffic on the interstate you are caught in a heavy downpour. Other than activating your windshield wipers, what actions could you take to prevent a collision?

3. Why is frequently checking your mirrors important?

DRIVING IN HEAVY TRAFFIC

Name: _____ Date: _____

ANSWER PAGE

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1. In the collision example that occurred in heavy traffic, how could the CMV driver have contributed to this collision?

Truck mirrors may have been dirty or not adjusted, driver may have not noticed the sedan enter his blind spot and could have adjusted his speed, the CMV driver may have been distracted and left his lane of travel, etc.

2. While driving in heavy traffic on the interstate you are caught in a heavy downpour. Other than activating your windshield wipers, what actions could you take to prevent a collision?

Reduce speed, increase following distances, exit the interstate until weather improves, minimize distractions such as turning off the radio, scan ahead for changing traffic conditions, activate headlights, communicate your intentions sooner before turning and stopping, etc.

3. Why is frequently checking your mirrors important?

Checking your mirrors will not only allow you to notice other vehicles but also notice tire damage or loose securement devices (straps, chains, etc.). Answers may vary.