

ACCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES

Rural Road Hazards

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



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Safety Management Services Company's Accident Countermeasures Program

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FARM EQUIPMENT HAZARDS

For a commercial driver, operating on rural roads and highways presents many hazards not commonly encountered out on the interstate highway system. Slow moving vehicles including farm tractors, front-end loaders, combines and various other farm implements can often be found operating on these rural roads, particularly during the spring and fall. Accidents involving trucks and these slow-moving farm vehicles often end with disastrous consequences.

Nearly 18% of crashes occurring on rural roads involve farm equipment and commercial motor vehicles. As a professional driver, several measures to prevent being involved in a crash with a slow-moving farm vehicle include:

- **SLOW DOWN.** When sharing the road with farm equipment, slow down and allow additional stopping distance between your truck and the vehicle in front of you. Anticipate that slow-moving vehicles may make sudden stops or turns from the roadway.
- Keep in mind how wide the farm equipment can be, especially if you will need to pass.
- Don't get impatient. Only pass a slow-moving vehicle when it is both legal and absolutely necessary to pass. Often times the commercial vehicle will only need to follow a slow moving vehicle a short distance before it will pull off the road. Remember that if you have a double-yellow line, you can never pass, even if behind a slow-moving vehicle.
- During planting and harvesting seasons, anticipate that farm equipment may be operating even after it is dark. Although these vehicles should have adequate lighting and slow-moving vehicle signs, in some cases this will not be the case.
- Rural roads have many more hills and blind curves where a slow-moving vehicle might be out of your view, so slow down when approaching these "blind" areas and anticipate the unexpected.

ADDITIONAL RURAL ROAD HAZARDS- AMISH BUGGIES

In many areas of the country, Amish buggies continue to operate on the roadways, including rural highways. Accidents involving trucks and these slow-moving wooden buggies are often tragic, as occupants of these buggies are most often ejected with great force. The primary causes of these vehicle accidents include:

- Sideswipe collisions with the motor vehicle operating too close to the buggy being passed.

- A collision when a buggy operator is making a left-hand turn and a motor vehicle initiates a last-minute pass around the slow-moving buggy.
- Rear-end crashes.
- Reduced visibility due to the glare of the sun or dark of night, causing the commercial driver not to identify a slow-moving buggy on the roadway.
- Keep in mind that when passing an Amish buggy, you must leave plenty of room, as the horse could become alarmed by the tractor-engine noise and/or rush of wind caused by your truck.

ADDITIONAL RURAL ROAD HAZARDS- BICYCLISTS

As bicycling continues to increase in its popularity within the United States, an increased number of bicyclists can be spotted riding on rural roads and even state highways. When encountering a bicyclist, slow down and pass with caution, making sure you give a wide area of room as the wind created by your truck can virtually throw a rider off his/her bike and possibly under your trailer.

SUMMARY

Operating on roads in rural areas can create many accident situations not often faced when operating on the interstate highway system. Slow-moving farm equipment, Amish buggies, and bicyclists are just a few of the exposures the commercial driver must anticipate when operating in rural areas.

Although we have reviewed many measures the professional driver can employ to prevent these types of crashes, the most important factor to keep in mind is to SLOW DOWN. Most losses occurring in rural areas can be prevented if we simply keep this safety factor in mind.

ACCIDENT INFORMATION

Date / Location:	June 7, 2007 / Elkhart County, Indiana.
Accident Description:	<p>An Amish buggy carrying two female passengers was traveling along the side of a rural, two-lane county road. The commercial driver stated that he observed the buggy driver hold out her left hand and he assumed she was directing him to pass.</p> <p>The commercial motor vehicle was traveling approximately 30 m.p.h. and accelerating to pass when the buggy began a left turn into a farm driveway. Both occupants of the Amish buggy were ejected and died at the scene of blunt-force trauma.</p>
Comment:	A witness stated the buggy driver was, in fact, indicating a left turn with her arm.
Loss Costs:	\$2,000,000 anticipated loss.
Weather Conditions:	Sunny and dry.
Primary Lesson:	Slow down, anticipate turns by a slow-moving vehicle, and never “assume” that hand signals will be clearly understood by you and the operator of a slow-moving vehicle.

RURAL ROAD HAZARDS

Name: _____ Date: _____

QUESTION PAGE

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

1. What percentage of crashes occurring on rural roads involves commercial motor vehicles and farm equipment?
2. What are the three primary causes of crashes between commercial trucks and Amish buggies?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Why should a tractor-trailer driver give extra room when passing an Amish horse and buggy?
4. What can occur when a tractor-trailer does not leave adequate room when passing a bicyclist traveling on a rural road?
5. What one action can a commercial driver take to reduce the chances of being involved in a crash with a slow-moving vehicle while on rural roads?

RURAL ROAD HAZARDS

ANSWER PAGE

DO **NOT** INCLUDE THIS PAGE WITH THE COUNTERMEASURES HANDOUT TO THE DRIVER!

1. What percentage of crashes occurring on rural roads involves commercial motor vehicles and farm equipment?

18% of crashes on rural roads involve farm equipment and commercial vehicles.

2. What are the three primary causes of crashes between commercial trucks and Amish buggies?

- a. Buggy making left turn and the commercial vehicle following begins to pass (on left).
- b. Rear-end crashes.
- c. Reduced visibility due to fog, glare of sun, or dark of night.

3. Why should a tractor-trailer driver give extra room when passing an Amish horse and buggy?

The horse could become alarmed by truck-engine noise.

4. What can occur when a tractor-trailer does not leave adequate room when passing a bicyclist traveling on a rural road?

The wind created by the truck can toss a bike rider off his/her bike.

5. What one action can a commercial driver take to reduce the chances of being involved in a crash with a slow-moving vehicle while on rural roads?

SLOW DOWN – reduce your speed.