

Tailgate Meeting Guide: Driving Around Large Trucks

On average between 2014 and 2018, 287 people were killed each year on BC roads and highways – 56 of them in crashes involving at least one large commercial vehicle ¹. Use this guide to help employees understand how to avoid being involved in a crash with a truck.

The facts

- There are 3.4 million vehicles insured in BC; about 25 percent of them are large commercial vehicles. ¹
- In an average year in BC, large trucks are involved in less than 1% of all crashes – but they’re involved in nearly 20 % of fatal crashes. ²
- Studies show that in fatal car-truck collisions, 2/3 or more are the fault of the passenger vehicle driver. ³
- In collisions between cars and large trucks, the occupants of the passenger vehicle are at least **4 times more likely** to be killed than the driver of the truck. ⁴

What drivers need to know

1. Trucks have larger blind spots than smaller passenger vehicles.

Every vehicle has blind spots, but the size and shape of large trucks and trailers means they have larger blind spots. This is true even though truck drivers have a higher seating position and their trucks are often equipped with multiple mirrors.

What drivers should do to keep safe

As you come up behind a truck, be aware of their blind spots. Make a plan to avoid being in any of them.

- If you’re passing, move steadily through truck blind spots. If you’re not passing, drive in a location that’s not in one of their blind spots.
- Avoid front and rear blind spots altogether.



2. Trucks CANNOT stop or manoeuvre as quickly as smaller vehicles.

A fully loaded transport truck travelling at 65 km/h takes 36 percent longer to brake and stop than a passenger car travelling at the same speed. That distance increases with speed. Braking abruptly in front of a truck means the truck might not have enough time or space to stop or to take action to prevent a collision.

¹ ICBC Quick Statistics 2018

² ICBC and Police Reported data, 2011-2015

³ Literature review conducted by RoadSafetyBC, July 2017

⁴ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, June 2017

What drivers should do to keep safe

- Don't merge too soon.
 - In the city (50 km/hr) make sure you leave at least three (3) car-lengths of space in front of the truck before you pull in front of it.
 - On the highway, merge in front of a truck only when both of its headlights are visible in your rear-view mirror.
- Respect the longer stopping distances and slower manoeuvring abilities of trucks. Give them the space they need to operate and safely do their jobs.

3. Trucks make wide turns

Because of their size and length, trucks make wide turns. In order to make a right turn at an intersection, trucks often must swing into the left lane before turning back to the right. If the intersection is tight or another vehicle is crowding the stop line, the truck may have to swing right before turning left. Anticipate those actions.

What drivers should do to keep safe

- Watch for and pay attention to truck signals when approaching intersections.
- Avoid driving in the right-hand lane beside a truck that's making a right-hand turn.
- When a truck swings wide to make a left or right turn, slow down or stop to give them the room they need to safely complete the turn.
- Don't crowd intersections – stop well before the stop line.

Resources

[Be Truck Aware – RoadSafetyBC](#)

[Truck Smart You Tube](#)

[SafetyDriven – 8 Strategies To Keep You Safe](#)

[Be Truck Aware – Blind Spots](#)

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