

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

January 2024



Avoid the NO-Zone

When we drive in populated areas, we will most likely come across larger vehicles, such as trucks, buses, semi-trucks, or livestock carriers. These larger vehicles have raised driver seats, and these raised seats cause the drivers to sit at a higher position, which causes them to have a blind spot known as the No-Zone. Drivers of these vehicles are unable to see certain areas around them. We want to make sure we are not hanging out in a truck's No-Zone. A smaller car can virtually "disappear" from a truck's view. There are four areas to avoid when approaching a larger vehicle: The front, rear, and both sides of the tractor. Traveling in these areas will greatly increase the potential for you to get into a traffic accident.

The infographic is divided into three main sections. On the left, a green car is shown from a top-down perspective. In the center, a hand is shown holding a blue cylindrical object, possibly a mirror or sensor, with an arrow pointing upwards. On the right, a woman in a red jacket is shown driving a truck. Below these illustrations are three numbered points:

- 1 Avoid the front of the semi-truck**
SEMI-TRUCKS SIT UP HIGHER THAN NORMAL CARS, MAKING YOU INVISIBLE TO CARS TRAVELING CLOSE TO THEIR FRONT.
- 2 Avoid the rear of the semi-truck**
RULE OF THUMB: IF YOU CANNOT SEE THE DRIVERS FACE IN THEIR MIRRORS THEN THEY CANNOT SEE YOU.
- 3 Avoid both sides of the semi-truck**
WHEN PASSING, TRY TO EXIT THE NO-ZONE AREAS AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN. PASS TO THE LEFT OF THE SEMI-TRUCK, NEVER THE RIGHT.

At the bottom of the infographic is a blue semi-truck. To the right of the truck, there is a steering wheel icon and the text "AVOID THE No-Zone".

The first and most dangerous No-Zone is at the very front of the vehicle. As we mentioned before, the drivers sit up higher, and their cabs have extremely long hoods, put all of that together and you will find yourself sitting right under the driver's nose, quite literally. These bigger vehicles cannot stop as quickly, and driving too close in front can cause your vehicle to get run over. Give enough space between you and the larger vehicle behind you.

If you find yourself behind a semi, don't get too close. If you drive too close, the driver won't see you at all. It can be tricky to know if you are in a driver's blind spot, but there is one rule of thumb to help you travel safely. If you can see the truck driver's face in their mirrors, then the driver can see you. This gives you a clue that the driver can see your vehicle. However, if you cannot see the driver's face, then that driver cannot see you and you have found yourself in the NO-Zone. Always make sure you can see the driver's face.

Since semi-trucks are so long, they have big blind spots on either side of their vehicle, with the visibility being limited on the driver's right side. If you need to pass a larger vehicle, make sure you don't linger beside them for too long. Try to exit the No-Zone areas quickly. When passing, make sure you pass to the left, that is where the driver's blind spot is smaller, providing you the safest option for passing. Try and beware of larger vehicle's wide right turns. If you and the truck both need to make a right turn, be mindful that the larger vehicle needs more room than you do to turn.

Lastly, stay focused on the road. Be alert and aware of all your surroundings, and free yourself from distractions.

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Driving Safely in Windy Weather

There may come a time when you find yourself having to drive in windy and rainy weather conditions. While that can seem scary, fear not, we have some helpful tips that will keep you safe during unpleasant weather conditions. It is important to understand that severe weather conditions require our undivided attention.

While wind may not seem like it can present an immediate risk, these weather factors still deserve special attention from drivers. Be alert and anticipate large gusts of wind. If you are prepared, then you will be able to handle unexpected wind gusts. Be aware of larger vehicles if the weather is windy. These vehicles are more susceptible to high winds and these drivers may have trouble staying in their lanes. Keep a firm grip on the wheel. Sometimes large gusts can cause your car to want to drift, having both hands firmly

gripped on the wheel can help to avoid swaying and swerving into other lanes, and you are ready to correct your steering.

Slow down to minimize the wind effect on your vehicle. Driving at a slower distance during a windstorm can prove to be most beneficial. By slowing down you will be better able to handle debris or limbs that have blown into the roadways.

You can help make yourself safer by checking your vehicle before driving on a windy day. Check your tires and make sure they have good tire tread. If you notice your tire tread is low, your car will become more prone to a large wind gust due to poor tire grip. Avoid rapidly changing lanes during windy weather. As high winds can push your vehicle, abruptly changing lanes can cause your vehicle to sway into someone else's lane.



Keep in mind that sometimes the best decision you can make is to stay put and avoid driving altogether until the weather conditions clear. If you are driving on the highway during extreme winds, pulling over until the weather conditions have passed is sometimes your safest bet.

Be Predictable While Driving

It might sound strange to hear someone tell you to be predictable, but when it comes to driving, being predictable is key. Safe driving is based on predictability. There are routine things all drivers should do to help keep themselves and others safe while we have to share the roadways. For example, if I find myself driving along the roadway, and I see a person to my right waiting to pull out, I know that I have the right away and I can predict that the person will wait until the roadway is clear before they proceed to pull out. Let's say you decided to be extra nice that day and you wanted to stop and let the car to your right out, well, the person behind you might not realize what you are doing and run into the back of your vehicle. They predicted that you would follow the rules of the roadway and that the car to the right would wait their turn to pull out. Your act of kindness, while extremely sweet and extremely thoughtful, made you unpredictable on the roadway.

Let's say you were on a road trip with your mom, and she is in charge of giving you directions to your final destination. Abruptly, GPS changes, causing you to suddenly need to turn right. Putting on your turn signal and waiting until it is safe to merge over is the predictable, safe thing to do. The cars around you will notice your turn signal, and predict that you need to merge over to turn. If you find yourself unable to safely merge, wait until you can merge over and reroute yourself back to your next stop.

Always use your turn signal and avoid sudden stops. Leave space between you and the car in front of you, just in case the car in front of you decides to be unpredictable and stop suddenly for a small animal in the road, which is an extremely kind thing to do, if you're traveling far enough behind them, their sudden stopping wont effect your traveling journey.

