

DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



NPTC
National Private Truck Council

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Our Nation's Roadway Safety Crisis

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More than 370,000 people died in transportation incidents over the last decade (2011-2020) in the United States, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. And of those, more than 350,000 of them died on our roads. Although there was a consistent decline in roadway fatalities and fatality rates for 30 years, progress has stalled in the last decade and has gone in the wrong direction in 2020 and 2021, according to the Fatality Analysis Reporting System. Compared to 2020, fatalities increased:

- 10.1% overall
 - 42,939 lives were lost, *the highest total number recorded since 2005*
- 14% on urban roads
- 14% among drivers ages 65 and older
- 12.5% among pedestrians
 - Totaling 7,388 lives lost, *the highest recorded in decades*
- 17% of fatal crashes involving at least one large truck
- 8% among motorcyclists
 - Totaling 5,932 lives lost, *the highest total ever recorded*

These are some tips from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to help prevent accidents and comply with safety standards. Some of these best practices start before getting into the cab.

- Get enough rest; don't drive when you're fatigued, too ill to focus, or on medications (including over-the-counter medicine) that make you drowsy or dizzy.
- Stay up to date on weather and road conditions and detours to plan driving time.
- Make sure that pre-trip safety inspections are completed particularly for tires and brakes. Make sure your load is well-balanced and secure, as a shifting load can cause a rollover or loss of control.
- Use your safety belt every time. Safety belts save lives, reduce injuries and allow drivers to stay inside and in control of their vehicles in case of a crash. One-third of truck drivers involved in fatal crashes were partially or totally ejected from their vehicles.
- Once you climb behind the wheel, scan ahead about 15 seconds (a quarter mile on interstates or one to two blocks in cities) for traffic issues, work zones and other dangers.
- Check your mirrors every 8-10 seconds for vehicles entering your blind spots.
- Signal and brake to give other drivers plenty of time to notice and react to your intent.
- If you must pull off the road, use flashers, reflective triangles and road flares to alert other drivers.
- Driving too fast for weather or road conditions creates risks and crashes.
- Be aware that non-commercial navigation systems and apps may not provide warning of height and weight limitations and other commercial vehicle restrictions.
- Work zones present many hazards, like lane shifts, sudden stops, uneven road surfaces, moving workers and equipment, and confused passenger vehicle drivers. Slow down, maintain extra following space, obey all work zone signs and signals, and to be prepared to stop.
- Texting is among the worst driving distractions. The odds of being involved in a crash, near-crash, or unintentional lane deviation are 23.2 times greater for drivers who are texting while driving.
- Research shows that drivers texting while driving took their eyes off the forward road for 4.6 seconds on average. At 55 mph, this equates to traveling 371 feet (more than the length of a football field) without looking at the road.
- Eating, drinking, interacting with a navigational device, map reading, controlling a pet, or any other activity that takes focus off the road can also be a deadly distraction.
- If you must attend to an activity other than driving, get off at the next exit or pullover – it's not worth the risk.

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [Centerline Drivers](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.