



DRIVER SAFETY LETTER



Eyesight and Driving Safely

July 2022

Part of being a responsible driver is making sure your truck is safe for the road. It's also important to stay updated on the latest driving laws. But one responsibility you may not be thinking about as a person who drives for a living is more health-related, and it is your eyesight.

To obtain a regular driver's license, you must have at least 20/40 vision to be able to operate a vehicle without contacts or glasses. This means that if the average person can see a certain amount of detail at 20 feet away, you need to be able to see that same level of detail at 40 feet away. The U.S Department of Transportation requires that drivers of commercial motor vehicles maintain 20/40 vision or better. This is especially important as commercial vehicles are often bigger and heavier than other vehicles on the road. Being able to see any hazards or other safety issues in advance allows you, the driver, to take action early enough to potentially avoid an accident.

Other factors can impact your ability to safely navigate your driving routes. Research reveals that visual constrictions of 10 to 15 degrees can increase your accident risk, for instance, making it harder to see and quickly react to a person or animal that suddenly jumps on the road.

Individuals with color blindness may find it more difficult to know whether a traffic light is red, yellow, or green. Peripheral vision, depth perception, and night vision can also all impact driving safety.

After obtaining your commercial driver's license (CDL), you might not give your eyesight another thought. However, a vision test is required to keep your CDL active. So, be prepared to take and pass this test every two years or your license may not be renewed.

Seeing the eye doctor regularly helps you know whether your eyesight is good enough to pass the vision test. It also gives you the opportunity to resolve any issues that may prevent you from securing or updating your driver's license or CDL. You might need glasses or contacts, for example, to get your vision to the required standards.

Having your vision checked regularly isn't just important to your safety while on the road or for meeting licensing requirements. It can also potentially prevent your eyesight issues from getting worse. The sooner you can tend to a problem, the better your ability to treat it effectively. Let it go too long and you may not be able to recover.

Plus, an eye exam does more than just test your ability to see. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shares that it can also help detect whether an eye disease appears to be developing that could ultimately cause permanent vision loss. This includes looking for cataracts, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration.

If you have diabetes, this disease can also impact your ability to see by damaging the blood vessels found in the back of the eye. This is referred to as diabetic retinopathy and is the leading cause of blindness in adults in the U.S. according to the CDC.

So take a few moments and make your next eye appointment today. This ensures that you meet the requirements as set forth by your employer and the regulatory driving agencies. It also helps recognize any vision issues when in their initial stages, potentially preventing you from losing your eyesight altogether.

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 tmoores@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.