



Driving on the Fourth of July

June 2021

On the Fourth of July, many of us rightfully pause to give thanks for our nation's independence. It is a day of patriotic parties, parades and other celebrations. Sadly, it is also the most hazardous day to be on the road, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). In fact, more people die on that day than any other day of the year, with alcohol playing a large part. More people die in drunk driving crashes in July than any other month, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association.

With many in the country putting COVID-related restrictions in the rear-view mirror this year, we anticipate Americans taking to the highways in unprecedented numbers to celebrate with friends and family. This record number of travelers means more traffic, more congestion, more delays and potentially higher levels of alcohol consumption.

Here are some driving tips that will help you better negotiate the traffic conditions and stay safe on the road.

- Start each trip with an extra dose of patience and focus on your job by clearing your head of distractions.
- Plan the best route, including checking for traffic and weather-related updates. Factor in additional travel time if driving through congested areas or inclement weather.
- Ensure your truck is in good working order by conducting a full pre-trip inspection. It's important that you can be seen by other motorists, you can stop on time, and you don't add to the congestion by breaking down.
- Always buckle up and expect the unexpected.
- Watch for children and pedestrians in neighborhoods and shopping centers, as well as areas you might not usually encounter them. Keep in mind that some of these pedestrians may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Don't drive faster than road conditions merit. It is better to take your time. Be aware of the vehicle in front of you and the vehicle in front of them. Leave extra room between you and the vehicle ahead in case of sudden stops.
- There is often more road construction this time of year and other motorists may not be familiar with the new traffic patterns. A good rule of thumb is to reduce speeds when traveling through those areas over the holiday.
- Be aware of drunk drivers or erratic driving behaviors. Many drivers you encounter may be driving impaired, confused, fatigued or distracted. As a responsible driver yourself, do your part to remove as many distractions as possible from the cab of your truck including food, phones, maps, papers and the like. Even just two seconds of distraction time doubles the chances of an accident.

Keep these driving tips in mind to make sure you – and others – can celebrate their freedoms this Fourth of July weekend!

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.