

TOOLBOX TALKS

Sharing the road and overtaking trucks

Introduction

More and more trucks are on the South African roads transporting goods from point A to point B. These trucks, loaded, are between 10 and 60 tons at one time.

Heavy vehicles are large and slow and not very maneuverable. Overtaking these vehicles can be dangerous.

The rear trailer can often obstruct vision of the road ahead and can swerve from side to side over the road.

Other drivers may get impatient and overtake when they have no view of the road ahead.

We often find on the back of these trucks the important reminder to motorists that "If you cannot see the mirror of the truck the truck driver cannot see you". What should we be aware of when overtaking trucks and how can we do this safer? The following information may assist other road users share the roads with trucks.

Common Truck Types



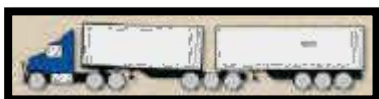
Rigid: 12,5 metres long; speed limited to 80 km/h



Rigid & Dog: 19 metres long; speed limited to 80 km/h



Semi-Trailer: 19 metres long; speed limited to 80 km/h



B-Double: 22 metres long; speed limited to 80 km/h with "LONG VEHICLE" sign at rear

GENERAL SPEED LIMITS in terms of the National Road Traffic Act, 1989 and its Regulations are:

SPEED LIMITS AND THE LAW:

- 60 km/h on a public road within an urban area
- 100 km/h on public road outside an urban area which is not a freeway: and
- 120 km/h on every freeway.

A maximum speed limit of 80 km/h for a goods vehicle with a GVM exceeding 9t, a combination vehicle consisting of a goods vehicle (i.e. drawing vehicle and one or two trailers) of which the sum of the GVM of the goods vehicle and of the trailer(s) exceeds 9t and an articulated vehicle of which the GCM exceeds 9t.

Provision is also made that certain vehicles (minibuses, busses, and goods vehicles) shall not exceed the speed limits imposed on tyres by SABS 1550 or as approved by the manufacturer of such tyres.

Breaking Distances

A truck requires a longer braking distance than a car. Please don't cut in in front of a truck approaching a red light, roundabout or even in traffic. When approaching a green light at an intersection, be aware of the traffic around you. If the lights change to orange and you decide to brake hard, will vehicles behind you be able to stop in time? At an orange light you are required to stop but only if it is safe to do so. If not, continue through the intersection.

Accelerating Distance

A fully loaded truck takes time to accelerate to the speed limit. If the truck can keep moving as it coasts towards the red lights, there will be less delay for all traffic when the lights change. Likewise, a truck driver may accelerate to the speed limit before a hill to reduce delay for following motorists. As such, watch your speed and avoid delaying other traffic by unnecessarily slowing the truck.

Overtaking

Unsafe overtaking is something truck drivers see all too often. People can become impatient behind trucks on hills or when there are few passing opportunities. Some people take a very large risk for only a few seconds' gain.

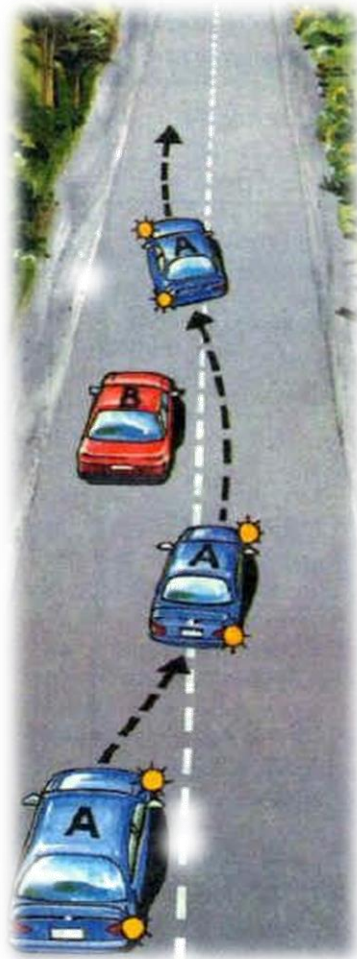
So, allow plenty of space pass quickly but safely and pull back in only when you can see both headlights of the truck in your rear-view mirror. This allows a safe space, but don't then slow down in front of the truck.

Before attempting to overtake, ask yourself the following:

- What will you achieve?
- What are the risks?
- Is it safe and is it legal?
- How far is it to the next overtaking lane?
- What type of truck are you overtaking?

It is also important to avoid being pressured into overtaking by other following vehicles. Keep your cool and if necessary, let them pass.

A Step-By-Step Guide to Safe Overtaking



Positioning: If it becomes necessary to overtake, do not tailgate the vehicle ahead as it will greatly reduce forward vision. Maintain a safe following distance.

Scanning: Scan the road for approaching traffic, ensure you have enough space to safely complete the manoeuvre, check you know where the road goes next and that there are no inclines or declines hiding vehicles. Some truck drivers may even flash their indicators to let you know it is safe to overtake them (in this situation, don't just assume it is safe).

Indicate: If safe, indicate your intentions and check no one else is attempting to overtake you and the vehicle ahead.

Pull Out: Pull out before accelerating forward so the driver ahead knows you are coming. Blip your horn if necessary, to alert this driver.

The Retreat: If due to the unexpected or a miscalculation you are not going to make it, brake firmly and attempt to steer in behind the vehicle again. Do not accelerate, hope and pray.

The Finish: Pull in as soon as you can see the headlights of the vehicle you have passed in your centre rear-view mirror. A wave of thanks to the driver may be constructive.

Road Courtesy

Your license is a privilege and not a right. Your attitude to others and their actions will determine whether your life on the road will be one of stress and aggression or of safely getting home. All of us will occasionally suffer from another driver's act of indifference or stupidity and only better driver education will help people to drive more safely and all road users will benefit. A wave of sorry or thanks as applicable is far better than an escalation of a situation.

Road Positioning

As a professional truck driver, I am amazed at how many drivers travel much closer to the centre line than is necessary. My truck occupies much of its lane and approaching traffic therefore should create a buffer zone. Increase your own safety by making the best use of the lane space, especially when towing a trailer or caravan, and be even more aware of your position on the road. If you are parking on the side of the roadway, whether just for a minute, broken down or even if pulled over by the police, park well clear where possible. Police officers are instructed to park further to the right of the vehicle they stop; this gives them a safety corridor beside the other vehicle to protect the police from passing traffic. But some people park only centimetres from the fog line (the unbroken line on the left of the roadway) and with trucks using all the road, this leaves little room for error.

Narrow Roads

On narrow roads be prepared to put your left-hand wheels off the tarmac when necessary if a truck comes from the other way. Don't fight the truck for the tar. When the truck gets off the tarmac you might have upwards of 20 tyres throwing rocks at your car. On very narrow roads it may be necessary to get off the tarmac altogether.

Thanks, and safe traveling!

For more detailed information on overtaking : [Safe Driving and Safely Overtaking](#)

DISCUSSION

Questions from staff

Comments by staff

Suggestions from staff

TOOLBOX TALK ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Date		Facilitator Name:	
Site/Department:		Facilitator Signature:	
Topic:			

The information in this document had been explained to me and I understand the content

Emp Name	Emp No	Signature	Emp Name	Emp No	Signature