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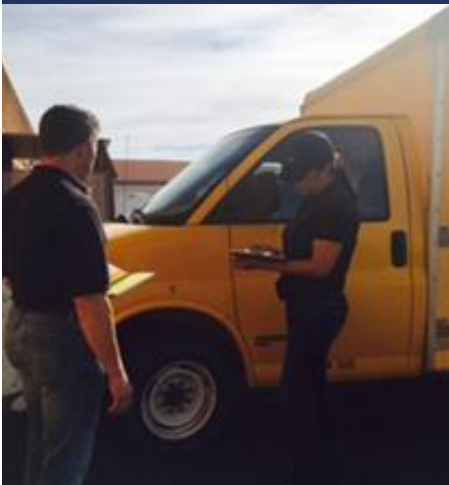
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Warning devices: Know what to do

No matter how safely you operate your vehicle or how well you maintain it, there’s always the possibility of being involved in an accident or vehicle breakdown. Knowing what to do and what to expect can help you safely and legally deal with the situation.

Warning device requirements

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) require a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) to carry at least:

- Three bidirectional emergency reflective triangles;
- Six fuses capable of burning for 30 minutes; or
- Three liquid burning flares that contain enough fuel to burn continuously for at least 60 minutes.



Flame-producing devices are not allowed on:

- Any vehicle carrying Division 1.1, 1.2, or 1.3 (explosives);
- Any cargo tank motor vehicle used for the transportation of Division 2.1 (flammable gas) or Class 3 (flammable liquid) hazardous materials whether loaded or empty; or
- Any CMV using compressed gas as a motor fuel.

Warning device placement

If a vehicle is stopped on the traveled portion or shoulder of the highway, you must immediately activate the vehicle’s four-way flashers, and within 10 minutes of stopping, set out warning devices.

When placing the devices, you should hold them in front of yourself to increase visibility to traffic. You should wear a high-visibility vest and be alert for other drivers who may not see you on the road.

The placement of devices varies depending on where the vehicle is stopped.

Two-lane road. On a two-lane road:

1. The first device should be placed on the traffic side of the vehicle 10 feet (4 paces) from the front or rear, depending on traffic direction.

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2. The second device should be placed 100 feet (40 paces) behind the vehicle.
3. A third device should be placed 100 feet (40 paces) ahead of the vehicle on the shoulder or in the lane where the vehicle is stopped.

One-way or divided highway. The devices should be placed 10, 100, and 200 feet from the rear of the vehicle, toward approaching traffic.



Within 500 feet of a hill, curve, or obstruction. A device should be placed:

1. 100 to 500 feet from the vehicle in the direction of the obstruction.
2. The other two should be placed according to the rules for two-lane or divided highways.

Accidents

When an accident happens, your immediate action is necessary.

- Stop immediately;
- Remain calm and if possible, pull the vehicle as far off the road as possible;
- Turn on the vehicle's four-way flashers and set out warning devices;
- Notify law enforcement;
- Check for injuries;
- Document the accident;
- Notify the motor carrier; and
- Complete a preliminary report.

When documenting the accident, include:

- Time and location;

- Description of damage;
- Names and addresses of all people involved;
- Names and addresses of the insurance companies of the people involved;
- Type, make, model, and license numbers of all vehicles involved; and
- Name(s) and department(s) of investigating officer(s).

You should be polite and respectful; keeping in mind that anything said at the accident scene could be used against you and/or motor carrier at a later date.

You should never discuss specific details with others, volunteer unnecessary information, or admit fault. You shouldn't try to settle anything at the scene.

You should honestly answer questions asked by law enforcement. You should be factual, but never speculate or guess as to what may have caused the accident or who is at fault.

Vehicle breakdowns

When a breakdown occurs, safely stop and secure the vehicle. Turn on the vehicle's four-way flashers and set out warning devices.

After placing the warning devices, contact the motor carrier. Provide the location of the breakdown and a description of what happened including odd sounds or smells, vehicle handling issues, and any other information that may be important to the person performing the repairs.



Safety focus: Slips, trips, and falls

Though it may seem like a minor thing, a slip, trip, or fall should be taken seriously. The consequences may be more severe than you think.

Something as simple as missing a step getting into your vehicle, an icy parking lot, or a wet warehouse floor can cause an accident. This accident can result in an injury requiring time away from work.

An awareness of your surroundings can help prevent many slips, trips, and falls.

Slips occur when there is a loss of traction between your footwear and the walking surface. They can be avoided by following these safety precautions:

- Practice safe walking skills. Take short steps and point your feet slightly outward on slippery surfaces to keep your center of balance.
- Clean up or report spills right away.
- Be extra cautious on smooth surfaces such as newly washed and/or waxed floors.
- Wear appropriate footwear. Make sure the footwear's soles or treads have not worn smooth.



Trips occur whenever your foot hits an object and you are moving with enough momentum to be thrown off balance.

You can help avoid trips by:

- Making sure you can see where you are walking. Don't carry loads you cannot see over.
- Keeping walking and working areas well lit, especially at night.
- Keeping the work area clean and tidy.
- Properly maintaining walking areas and alerting appropriate authorities regarding potential maintenance related hazards.

Falls are the result of losing your footing and center of balance. You can help avoid falls by:

- Never jumping off landings or loading docks.
- Repairing or replacing stairs or handrails that are loose or broken.
- Keeping passageways and aisles clear of clutter and well lit.

Loading docks

Slips, trips, and falls can all occur on a loading dock. Pay attention to your surroundings and the hazards you may encounter.

- Floors should be dry and clean. Snow, ice, oil, and grease can create a loss of traction.

- Dock approaches and floors should be free of debris, potholes, and pavement that is buckling or deteriorating.
- Be on the lookout for unguarded or unmarked openings.

When working on or around a loading dock:

- Use handrails and grips;
- Never run up or down stairs;
- Never carry items that you can't see over; and
- Make sure the area is well lit.

Entering/exiting vehicles

All trucks and truck tractors are required to have steps and handholds and/or deck plates that allow you to have at least three limbs in contact with the truck or truck tractor at all times. This requirement is referred to as the three-point rule. Having three points of contact provides balance and reduces your chances of slipping, tripping, or falling. It also gives you a better chance of catching yourself should you slip, trip, or fall.

When entering your vehicle, both hands should be free. Don't try to carry something while entering the vehicle.

When either entering or exiting the vehicle, make sure you are facing the vehicle, and never jump from the vehicle.

Vehicle coupling/uncoupling

Grease, oil, snow, and ice can all pose hazards when it comes to coupling and uncoupling your vehicle. Never step over air or electrical lines as you could lose your footing or trip; always climb down and walk to the other side. Make sure you have firm footing when you pull the release handle to avoid slipping.

Flatbeds

When loading or unloading a flatbed or checking its tarps and/or straps, always have three points of contact and be certain of your footing. Use handholds when climbing on to or exiting a flatbed. Never jump or swing down.

Also, watch for slippery areas and items that could cause you to trip.

Selecting footwear

Selecting appropriate footwear is an important step in preventing slips, trips, and falls.

When selecting footwear, consider the conditions and hazards you face on the job. For example, you may want to consider a rubber-soled or other type of non-slip footwear to increase friction and have a certain level of traction.



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Back pain and how to prevent it

"Without a struggle, there can be no progress."

Frederick Douglass



Prevent back pain by keeping your back and abdominal muscles strong.

Back pain affects most adults at some point in their life and can last for a few days to weeks or months. Lower back pain is most common, but soreness can be felt anywhere along the spine, from the neck to the hips. The pain can range from a dull, constant ache to a sudden, sharp sensation that leaves a person incapacitated.

Conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, or scoliosis can lead to back pain. Back pain can also be brought on by:

- A sudden, awkward movement;
- Repeated heavy lifting;
- A sprain or strain;
- Poor posture;
- Anxiety and stress; or
- Sleeping in an awkward position.

Taking good care of your health is one way to prevent back pain. People who are not physically active, are overweight, or smoke may be at risk for back pain.

Most cases of back pain improve on their own over time, but if you're worried about your back, or if pain hasn't gone away after six weeks, it's best to see a doctor.

Prevention

One of the best ways to prevent back pain is to keep your back and abdominal muscles



strong. If these muscles are weak, they may not properly support the spine.

Staying active, and doing back strengthening and stretching exercises two to three times each week, can help protect your back from injury. Common exercises to help your core and back include:

- **Planks:** While on your stomach, prop yourself up on your toes and hands or forearms. Your shoulders should be above the elbows. Create a straight line from head to toe. Don't allow the lower back to sink. Hold for 10 seconds to 1 minute, and repeat.
- **Bridge pose:** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet on the floor. Keeping your shoulders and head on the floor, raise your hips. There should be a straight line from your knees to your shoulders. Lift and lower the hips 10 times or more.
- **Child's pose:** Lie face down with knees tucked under you. Extend the arms. You should feel a stretch from the shoulders to the lower back. Hold for five to 10 breaths.

Before starting an exercise program, it's best to consult a doctor for more information on exercise and specific strengthening exercises.