

# fact sheet | sharing the road with heavy vehicles



**Heavy vehicles account for 15 per cent of fatal vehicle crashes. They present a major road safety issue because of the size, mass and inability to stop or change direction as quickly as smaller vehicles in the event of an emergency.**

Motorists need to be aware of the difficulties associated with driving a heavy vehicle and keep this in mind when sharing the road with a truck or road train.

## **Avoid heavy vehicle blind spots**

Heavy vehicles have three blind spots that motorists should avoid:

- Beside the truck's left door
- By the truck's right door
- Directly behind the truck
- Immediately in front of the truck (see diagram)

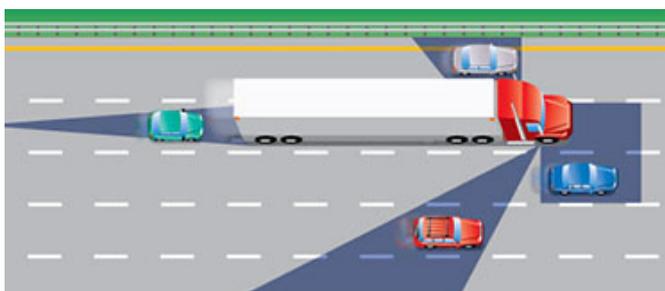


Image source: The official MTO Driver's Handbook.

When travelling behind a heavy vehicle, if you cannot see the mirror of the truck: then the driver cannot see you. Make sure you are clear of a heavy vehicle driver's blind spot before overtaking. Never cut in front of a heavy vehicle, as this can severely reduce the available distance for them to brake and may increase the risk of your vehicle being hit by the heavy vehicle.

## **Travel at a safe following distance**

Heavy vehicles have certain limitations when it comes to accelerating and slowing down, so it's important to remain at a safe distance when following a heavy vehicle.

- Do not follow a heavy vehicle too closely, because it will limit how far ahead of the truck you can see.
- Allow enough time to stop safely when travelling behind a heavy vehicle, especially in wet weather.
- When intending to overtake a heavy vehicle, stay well back from the rear of the vehicle and wait for a safe overtaking opportunity.
- Be aware of turning heavy vehicles. If a heavy vehicle has a "Do Not Overtake Turning Vehicle" sign, it is allowed to take up more than one lane when turning. Be prepared to allow extra room for it to turn, using an additional lane.
- Don't stop too close behind them on an uphill grade as they may roll back slightly.

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## Safely overtake heavy vehicles

It's important to allow plenty of time to overtake long vehicles, especially in wet weather or changed road conditions.

- Make sure there is no on-coming traffic for a sufficient distance before overtaking.
- When overtaking, indicate clearly, accelerate and overtake quickly, without exceeding the speed limit. You cannot exceed the speed limit, even in an overtaking lane, to get in front of a vehicle.
- Do not cut in front of the vehicle – allow enough room between you and the truck.
- When travelling on a highway, if possible, try to only use the overtaking lanes.
- Never overtake a long vehicle that is approaching a cross road, a dip or a bend, as there may be another vehicle hiding behind it which could be turning on to your road.

## Take care when overtaking trucks

A car travelling in a 110km/h speed limit zone, will take approximately one kilometre to safely overtake a 23 metre B-double truck that is travelling at 100km/h on a road with an overtaking lane.

On a two-way road with a 110km/h speed limit, two kilometres of clear road ahead is needed to safely overtake a 23 metre B-double vehicle that is travelling at 100km/h, in order to avoid oncoming vehicles also travelling at 110km/h.

Motorists can receive fines of up to \$275 for unsafe overtaking and can also be charged with dangerous driving.

\*Source: DPTI