



The truck driver's checklist

Professionally driven trucks are involved in fewer road accidents per kilometre travelled than any other vehicles. However, when they are involved in a crash, regardless of who is to blame, the results can be more serious as they are larger and heavier than other vehicles. The nature of the goods carried can also increase the severity of an accident.

As a truck driver, you must drive in a highly responsible manner at all times and show your professionalism by anticipating and forgiving the unsafe behaviour of other road users.

You can help save lives and improve the image of your profession.

Are you prepared?

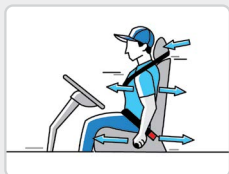
Your life and the life of other road users depend on your alertness and reactions in emergency



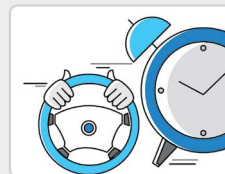
Professional driving is very demanding, so you need to stay fit, physically and mentally. **Healthy eating and drinking, as well as regular exercise** will help you to feel better, drive better and live longer.



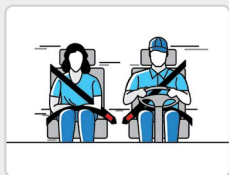
Don't drink alcohol before driving or take drugs or medication that could impair your driving skills. Avoid heavy meals before driving, as these can make you feel drowsy.



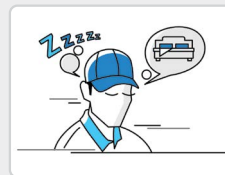
Adjust your seat so you are sitting as comfortably as possible, with all controls within easy reach. Ensure your head is positioned to benefit from the head restraint in case of an accident.



Respect the legal requirements related to driving and rest times. Non-compliance or tampering with the tachograph is illegal and shows a lack of respect for human lives. Use your rest hours to rest.

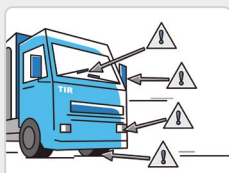


Use your seat belt if you have one and don't forget your co-driver. Even truck drivers can die if they go through the windscreen! Anyone resting in a bunk should be secured when the vehicle is in motion.

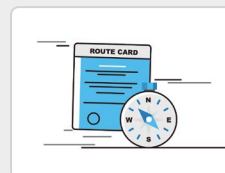


If you feel drowsy – STOP! Get out of your vehicle, stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

...And is everything else ready?



Is everything in good working order? Have you checked the brakes and brake lines (both tractor and trailer), tires (pressure and tread depth), coolant and oil? What about the mirrors, windows (are they free of unnecessary stickers?), windscreen wipers, lights and indicators? How about special equipment like extinguishers and snow chains? Is there any visible damage and is the vehicle clean?



Check your route. Are there any bridges, tunnels, etc. where your vehicle might have a problem (dimensions, weight, dangerous goods)? Does it make best use of motorways and avoid residential areas? Where will you take your breaks? Check the weather conditions.

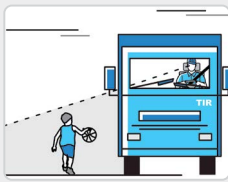


Is the load evenly distributed and properly secured? Will you have to redistribute it and secure it again if you unload part of it before your final destination?



Do you have the right documents? Have you inserted the tachograph disk/card? Do you have the legally required disks on board?

Take extra care on the road



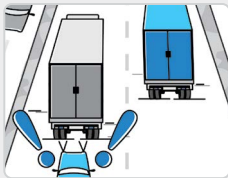
Remember you can't see smaller road users in your blind spot

Pay particular attention when:

- Turning, in case a vehicle is overtaking in your blind spot
- Reversing, especially if the steering wheel is on the "wrong" side (GB-IRL/continental Europe)



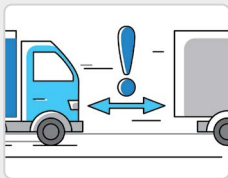
At night, dip your headlights in good time when traffic approaches from the opposite direction. Make sure your lights and reflectors are clean, so that your vehicle is visible.



Don't overtake unless you are sure that you have enough room and will not force other vehicles to slow down.



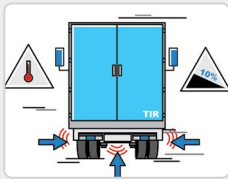
Adapt your driving to weather conditions. When roads are slippery with rain, mud, ice or snow (remember your snow chains), reduce your speed – the same goes for driving in fog, rain or at twilight, and in tunnels.



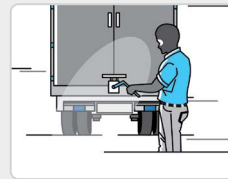
Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you – at least the minimum legal distance. The safe distance increases at higher speeds and if there is rain, mud, ice or snow on the road.



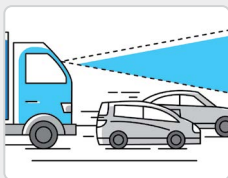
Park only where permitted. Take care not to obstruct traffic or the view of other road users and avoid residential areas. Make sure the vehicle cannot move when unattended. Don't leave your engine running unnecessarily.



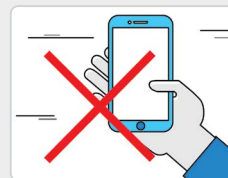
Stop if your engine brakes or retarder overheats. Don't proceed until you are sure that there is no further risk of overheating or failure.



Use secure parking areas wherever possible. Don't park in isolated, unlit places, especially at night. Don't tell strangers about your load or itinerary. Drive in a convoy if possible. Inspect your vehicle and load for signs of unauthorised entry or tampering before resuming your journey.



Try to anticipate problems. Avoid sudden braking and acceleration which may be dangerous to other road users, waste fuel and generate extra pollution.



It is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving. If you need to talk on the move, get a proper handsfree system installed.



Respect traffic regulations at all times. Don't adopt the bad habits of other road users. Driving safely protects your life, the lives of others and your job.



After the trip, report to your company any problems with your vehicle, the routes you used or the deliveries you made, so that repairs or adjustments can be made before the next trip.



In a breakdown, accident or other emergency, inform your base and/or the local emergency services immediately. Programme emergency numbers into your mobile phone before your trip.

This checklist is provided to you by the **IRU Academy**, the training arm of the **International Road Transport Union (IRU)**.

See our training programmes on www.iru.org/academy