

JORGE TORRES

COMMERCIAL DRIVER SAFETY
POCKET MANUAL

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Introduction

This guide explains how to work safely, avoid injury, and protect yourself against hazards, protect the equipment you operate, and keep the company in compliance.

Each section covers a task you perform during normal daily work. You are expected to follow the steps in each section every time. If someone instructs you to work in a way that goes against this guide or against safe work practices, stop and contact your supervisor before you continue.

All associates are responsible for reading and acknowledging this guide.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a professional CMV driver you are responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle you will be operating while employed by X. By signing below, you confirm you have received this guide, understand the expectations, and agree to follow these procedures.

- You will inspect equipment (truck, trailer) daily.
- You will not operate any vehicle you believe is unsafe.
- You will report defects, damage, and any incidents immediately.
- You will follow the procedures in this guide.
- You will follow FMCSA regulatory requirements.
- You will use any required Personal Protective Equipment.
- You will not bypass or ignore safety controls to “get the job done faster.”

Driver name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Manager Signature _____

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Once signed and dated tear off this page and turn in to management.

PRE-TRIP INSPECTIONS

Pre-trip inspections ensure your vehicle is safe and compliant, preventing accidents and DOT violations.

1. Coupling- Complete a tug test. Look at the fifth wheel. Make sure the jaws are locked on the kingpin, the handle is set, and there is no gap.
2. Walking around the unit- Watch for oil, fuel, coolant, sand, or uneven ground. Walk slow and controlled. Wear slip-resistant footwear.
3. Getting in and out of the cab- Use three points of contact every time. Keep steps and handholds clean so you do not slip.
4. Secure the truck while you inspect- Set the parking brakes. Chock wheels on a grade if needed. Keep the key in your hand so the truck cannot roll.
5. Hood / engine area- Watch your hands. Do not pinch your fingers opening or closing the hood. Use the grab points designed for that.
6. Emergency gear- Fire extinguisher must be mounted, charged, and secured. Triangles must be present and strapped. Spare fuses must be available.
7. Visibility- Wipers must be in good condition- Washer fluid

PRE-TRIP INSPECTIONS

topped off. Windshield must be clear. You must be able to see.

TRAILER CHECK

Proper trailer checks keep you safe and avoid accidents by ensuring everything is secure before you move.

1. Stand back from under side of trailer- Do not crawl under the trailer. Stay outside. Inspect the crossmembers, flooring, wiring with your eyes only.
2. Air lines and electrical lines- Lines cannot be rubbing, pinched, or dragging. Make sure they have proper clearance.
3. Opening trailer doors- Always assume the load has shifted before opening trailer doors. Stand to the side. Crack the door slowly. Keep control of the latch. Do not stand in the swing path.
4. Getting in and out of the trailer- Use a dock plate or proper step down. NEVER jump off the back of the trailer onto the ground.

LANDING GEAR

Before operating landing gear, visually check for missing bolts, hardware, or damage. If equipment appears to be roadworthy (safe for use) proceed; otherwise, stop and notify your supervisor immediately.

1. Body Position- Pick the correct gear, high or low. Use two hands in slow gear and start with a stable position facing the crank directly. Keep a solid, balanced stance, do not twist your back or lean on it. Set your truck and trailer brakes.
2. Hands and face- The handle can kick back if you are not paying attention to what you are doing. Keep your face, chest, knees, and legs out of the swing zone.
3. Lowering the Trailer- Make sure the ground is solid and level before dropping weight on the landing gear. Always survey the area for uneven surfaces or hazards. Keep feet clear of the pads.
4. Pulling Out- Slightly raise or lower first and confirm the trailer is supported before pulling out. Verify legs fully retracted before travel. Before leaving the area, landing

gear must be all the way up.

5. Surface Conditions- Clear mud or oil where you're working—gloves recommended for grip and skin protection. Securely stow the crank handle after use to protect equipment longevity; if excessive resistance is felt, stop and check for obstructions—never force the crank.

INSIDE THE CAB

Keep your cab safe and free of debris. Loose items can turn into dangerous projectiles in the event of a collision, and DOT officers often check for dirty, unkept tractors when deciding whether to dig deeper into a driver during inspections or roadside stops.

1. Loose items- Fire extinguisher clipped. Triangles secured. No loose tools, straps, or objects rolling around. Nothing behind the pedals. Keep exits clear.
2. Visibility- Glass and mirrors clean. Defrost and defog working.
3. Floor and steps- Steps and cab floor stay dry. Use three points of contact getting in and out.

ROADSIDE STOPS

The main danger at a roadside stop is traffic. Stay alert to stay safe.

1. **Parking-** Get off the road as much as you. Park as far off the travel lane as you safely can.
2. **Flashers and Brakes-** Signal and stop right to warn others. Flashers on. Set brakes.
3. **High-Visibility Gear-** Be seen before you step out, safety gear saves lives. High visibility gear on before you exit.
4. **Exit Side-** Pick the safest way out, traffic can be unpredictable. Exit on the non-traffic side when possible.
5. **Paperwork-** Keep documents handy (registration, insurance etc). You don't want to be fumbling or not able to find something simple, in turn, extending your time on the shoulder. Keep paperwork and ELD organized to keep shoulder time short.

LOAD SECUREMENT

Secure your load right, loose cargo can result in danger.

1. Straps and Load Bars- Check every strap and bar, weak gear fails fast. Use the correct number. Check working load limits. Use edge protectors so straps do not cut.
2. Opening the Doors at Delivery- Be ready for shifting load, safety first when you open up. Expect product to move. Stand clear. Control the door. Confirm load bars are still in place before you step inside.
3. How You Drive Affects the Load- Drive smoothly. Aggressive driving can throw everything off. Avoid sudden hard brake. Avoid fast lane changes. Do not snap the wheel. Sudden moves can shift cargo and cause rollover.
4. Beware of Heavy Loads- If you are pulling a trailer that is on the higher end of weight ratings you must avoid sudden stops, following too close to vehicles ahead, and driving while distracted. It is not uncommon for very harsh braking events to force product from the nose of the trailer to the back of the tractor (where the driver sits).

DEFENSIVE DRIVING (NORMAL CONDITIONS)

Drive as safely as you can every day. As a professional driver, it's not enough to just watch your own actions, you must also expect the motoring public to act unpredictably, irrationally, and unsafely, but you can avoid most road issues by using defensive driving techniques.

1. Following Distance – Space is your buffer, give yourself room to stop. Keep at least four seconds behind traffic at highway speed. Use a fixed object on the road to count time. Add more space when heavy or in tight traffic.
2. Mirrors – Keep eyes on all sides, mirrors are your early warning. Check mirrors every few seconds. Check mirrors before braking, turning, or merging.
3. Animals – Watch for wildlife, quick moves can turn bad fast. Watch for animals at dawn and dusk. Scan shoulders. Cover the brake. Do not yank the wheel into another lane or off the road.
4. Work Zones – Slow down in work zones, changes happen quick. Merge early. Slow down. Expect flaggers, lane shifts, and uneven surfaces.

5. Distraction - Stay focused, phones can wait till you're parked. No handheld device use while moving. Only touch the ELD if one-touch or voice and it is safe. If not, pull over.
6. Fatigue Signs While Driving - Catch tiredness early, your body will tell you when to stop. Take breaks, drink water, eat. If you drift in the lane, nod off, or miss signs, get off the road now.
7. Lane Control - Stick to your lane, unneeded switches cause trouble. Do not change lanes unless needed. Stay in the right lane where allowed.

DRIVING (INCLEMENT WEATHER)

Bad weather demands extreme caution. Failing to adjust your driving when bad weather strikes is like playing roulette with not just the equipment you are operating, but also with you own safety.

1. Rain - Rain makes roads slick, slow down significantly to avoid hydroplaning . Increase the distance between yourself and any vehicles ahead of you. Keep your inputs smooth. Do not use cruise control in heavy rain. If you start to hydroplane, ease off the throttle and hold the wheel steady.
2. Fog or Smoke - Low visibility is a killer. Be be extremely cautious in thick fog. Low beams only. Back off and open up space. If you cannot see, exit to a safe place. Once away from danger contact your supervisor to report the unsafe driving conditions.
3. Snow and Ice - Ice hides fast, gentle moves keep you on the road. Gentle throttle and brake. Watch bridges and over-passes first. Use chains where required. Remember: Black ice is nearly invisible. If you begin feeling a loss of traction safely exit the area. Once away from danger contact your

supervisor to report the unsafe driving conditions.

4. High Winds - Wind can push you off course, light loads are at higher risk. Slow down. Avoid exposed bridges if you are light or empty.
5. Lightning and Severe Storms - Severe storms can materialize quickly and without much warning. If you find yourself in a severe thunder/lightning storm situation and are parked, stay put. Stay in the cab. Reroute when it is safe to do so.

BACKING / YARD / CUSTOMER SITES

Backing causes 30-40% of truck accidents, often slow-speed into docks or objects, but hazards spike in active sites with forklifts, distracted pedestrians, or vehicles squeezing behind.

1. Before Backing - Know what's around you, check before you move. Get out and look (GOAL).
2. Before Backing - Walk all the way around the truck and trailer. Windows down. Radio off.
3. Before Backing - If you lose sight of your spotter, stop. Use mirrors and blind spot checks.
4. In Yards and at Customer Sites - Stay visible and follow rules, yards are busy places. High visibility gear is required a most yards and sites across the nation.
5. In Yards and at Customer Sites - Trailer doors must be secured before you move. Obey yard speed limits and traffic flow at all times.
6. In Yards and at Customer Sites - Sound horn and flashers before starting. Watch for forklifts crossing, pedestrians on phones, or vehicles darting behind. Halt if unsure, and make eye contact with those nearest to you to make sure they see you.

PRE-TRIP INSPECTIONS + DEFECT REPORTING

Conduct thorough pre-trip inspections to ensure vehicle safety and compliance at the start of each shift.

1. Do a Full Pre-Trip Every Time - Conduct a comprehensive inspection—omit no steps. Perform a full pre-trip inspection each time.
2. Tag Any Unsafe Unit Right Away - Identify and mark any unsafe vehicle immediately if it poses a risk. Tag any unsafe unit right away.
3. Record Defects in DVIR - Document all deficiencies accurately. Proper paperwork ensures regulatory compliance. Record defects in DVIR.
4. Do Not Dispatch That Unit Again Until Repair is Confirmed - Delay dispatch until repairs are verified, prioritize safety above all. Do not dispatch that unit again until repair is confirmed.

EMERGENCIES

Emergencies demand calmness, swift action, and clear decisions. Understanding these steps reduces confusion and fear, preventing a dangerous situation from escalating.

1. Fire - Small fires only, know when to run. Only try to put out a small fire if you already have a way out. Use a charged extinguisher. If it does not go out right away, evacuate and call 911.
2. Crash or Breakdown on the Road - Protect yourself first, get to a safe place before anything else. Hazard lights on. **ONLY EXIT WHERE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.** Place warning devices when it is safe to do so. Call 911 as soon as you are able to and let the police and EMS professional do their job. Report what took place to your manager or dispatcher. Take pictures of the scene, and the vehicles/ or property involved only when it is safe to do so. *Never take pictures of any injured person at the scene of an accident.*
3. Assisting Others on the Road - Compassion drives us to help, but **YOUR** safety comes first. If you have witnessed an accident take place and have pulled over to call 911 or assist in any way, it is absolutely imperative that you never

exit your vehicle where traffic is still moving. This danger is most pronounced when the incident occurs near any interstate, highway, or road where vehicles are traveling at speed. Please stay inside your vehicle and call 911 for help to avoid becoming another victim at the accident scene.

FATIGUE BEHIND THE WHEEL

Fatigue kills. Know your limits, stick to the rules, and prioritize rest to stay safe on the road.

1. Do Not Drive Sick - Fever, dizziness, or nausea signal you're unfit to drive; stay off the road to avoid compromising safety.
2. Follow Hours of Service Rules- Stick to driving schedules and take required breaks. The regulations were set by the DOT specifically to reduce driver fatigue and prevent fatigue-related accidents, injuries, and death on Americas roads.
3. Monitor Your Alertness: Watch for yawning, heavy eyelids, or trouble focusing, as these fatigue signs demand an immediate break from driving to ensure safety.
4. Assess Your Physical Condition: Recognize neck stiffness, muscle aches, or restlessness, as possible signs of fatigue.
5. Get 7-9 Hours of Sleep: Prioritize quality sleep nightly to restore energy and maintain alertness for safe driving.
6. Avoid Heavy Meals Before Bed: Eat light dinners to prevent discomfort and ensure restful sleep, reducing next-day fatigue.

7. Once You Feel Fatigue Signs, Act Fast: Your life and others' lives depend on it.

