

# Safety Tips

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As drivers we are responsible for many areas of safety: the general public, our equipments, our loads, and most importantly, our own. Here are some tips to make your world of trucking a little more safe for you personally.

1. Securing your truck. Many robbers and rapists break into the truck itself. Some have master sets of keys to different types of trucks. To secure your cab against break in while you are in the truck, run the seatbelts through the door handles and hook them. Buy a one-inch motorcycle securement strap and hook it between the door handles pulling the ratchet connector tight. You can do the same thing with a bungee strap and a cowbell.

I always leave the curtain open into my bunk when I get out of the truck. That way I can check the bunk easily before getting fully in the truck to see if there is someone lurking in there.

When I am approaching my truck I look under it, look at the reflections of between my truck and trailer if there is a shiny truck parked next to me for anyone standing between the truck, have my keys in my hand, and keep watching around me.

2. Your Attitude. Your attitude is the best thing that you can control to protect your safety. You cannot be a fluffy-headed airhead and survive driving truck. You cannot be overly friendly or act silly. You cannot project yourself as a victim. Instead you have to walk tall and be alert to what is going on around you. You can be pleasant and say good morning to another driver or even have coffee, but you should never, never get into another driver's truck. If you act like you don't know what you are doing when you actually do, or act silly, you will not gain the respect of your peers.

3. Your Appearance. If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and looks like a duck, it is most likely a duck wouldn't you say? Dress appropriately for the job. Wear trousers, jeans or slacks with a comfortable shirt or top that covers you. Save the bikinis for the beach, the mini skirts and short shorts with halter tops for the bar and the sloppy sweats for laundry day, cleaning the truck day, or gym day. Never wear flashy expensive looking jewelry, even if it is fake.

If you put on makeup with a trowel ala Tammy Faye, most likely it will not be long until you are either approached as a hooker or arrested for one as you walk across the parking lot. You do not have to be ugly or unmade up...just use some moderation.

I see many women carrying purses...don't. Carry a pocket wallet. It is harder to steal and harder to see. Always carry your CDL with you when you are out of the truck, if you are injured you can be identified and, if the police do happen to stop you to check out why you are walking across the lot, you have proof you are who you say you are.

4. 2nd Amendment Rights. Do not carry a gun. Though there are no federal laws prohibiting commercial drivers from carrying a gun; there are state laws that prohibit carrying a gun across state lines. I know too many people that go through the training to carry a gun and then cannot pull the trigger when in severe danger and end up getting shot with their own gun.

5. Protecting Yourself. Instead of a gun there are some things that you can carry legally to pro-

protect yourself. For women: a small can of hair spray, aerosol perfume, or spray deodorant when sprayed in an attacker's eyes can buy you a second or two of time to get away. For men: spray deodorant, small can of WD40 or other spray lubrication. For both, things to use as weapons that are legal: screwdriver, large set of keys, small pocket knife, hammer, pliers, wrench, kitchen knife, small piece of chain, or a crowbar.

6. Preplan Your Stops. If you are going into a big city, stop short and go in just ahead of rush hour. Always ask your shipper/receiver if there is a place that is safe to park and listen to him/her closely. Make sure of your directions before you go in so you do not get lost.

7. Common Sense. Never advertise what you are hauling or if you are a solo female and/or where you are going to park. Never sleep where you get your cash advances. Keep your doors locked when going through urban stop and go traffic or roads. Never open your window if approached...just wave off anyone approaching. Take showers during daylight times and, if possible, eat then too...that way you do not have to get out of your truck after dark. If the company you work for allows pets, get a small yappy dog both for company and security. Do not have cutesy stuff on your dash that can identify you as female. Keep your windows and vents shut when you are sleeping.

A little prevention is worth a truck load of cure...take some precautions, be alert to your surroundings and work within the fear, not out of fear. The trucking world is a big dangerous place, but you will do fine if you follow the above points.