



## Driver Well-being

As a professional driver, your health and well-being is key to ensuring you are safe whilst at work. Read our guide with top tips to help keep your well-being in check.

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# Driver Well-being

As a commercial driver, often operating in a pressurised environment, it is important to take care of your health and well-being. Below are our top tips to help reduce stress levels and keep your well-being in check.

## Sleep

According to Brake, it is estimated that between 10% and 20% of all road crashes worldwide are fatigue-related – get as much rest as possible before setting off on any journey.

- Lack of sleep will affect your reaction times and how you respond to situations on the road
- Don't drive when you are tired. Take proper rest and breaks, and if you feel tired on the road, pull over
- Adhere to Drivers' Hours Rules – they are there to keep you safe

## Initial Vehicle Check

Doing a daily walk around check is not just to ensure the vehicle is safe for the road; making sure everything works properly also ensures your own safety. The following are the three important areas to check before starting off on your journey.

- The cab: access, seat position and seat belts, mirrors and all vehicle controls
- Wheels & tyres: check for any damage, secure wheel nuts
- Also check visibility, load security, brakes, fuel tank, fluids and couplings

Read our **Vehicle Walkaround Check** factsheet for a detailed list of what to check.

## Weather

High winds, fog, rain, freezing temperatures and bright sunshine can all affect driving conditions, your safety, and that of other road users.

- Adjust your driving to meet the conditions on the road – drive at a safe speed
- Before you set off, check you have everything you need to stay safe on your journey
- Do you know what the weather is likely to be like where you are travelling? Make sure you take any necessary equipment/accessories with you: ice scraper, de-icer, sunglasses

Read our **Winter Driving Conditions/Summer Driving Tips** factsheets for helpful driving tips appropriate for these seasons.

## Loading Safety

Manual handling, loading activities and loading bays are all naturally hazardous. Whilst loading and unloading your vehicle, always focus on safety first and remember:

- Observe all rules and signage, and be mindful of other vehicles and personnel
- Inspect all equipment regularly for wear and tear or damage, both on and off the vehicle.  
If in doubt, don't use it, and report it
- Check your load is properly positioned, secure, not overweight, and does not impair your vision

## Speed

Travelling too fast for the conditions is a contributory factor in many fatal crashes in the UK.

- Are you aware of speed limits and stopping distances for the vehicle and the road?
- Road safety charity Brake estimates that every 1mph reduction in average speeds lowers crash rates by 5%
- Adopt 'defensive driving' techniques to reduce speed and fuel consumption – and ultimately lower stress

Read our **Speeding Fines** factsheet to keep up-to-date with the penalties for exceeding speed restrictions in the UK.

## Distraction and Stress

A Brake and Direct Line survey of UK drivers found that 71% had lost concentration at the wheel within a 12 month period due to stress or annoyance. Try to avoid the following distractions to ensure you remain alert whilst driving:

- Some distractions are obvious, such as changing the radio
- Emotional distractions – running late, having an argument, getting good or bad news – can all affect your reactions
- It is illegal to use a handheld mobile phone while driving. Put it in the glove box so it can't distract you

Read our **Mobile Phones, Driving and the Law** factsheet for more details re: the penalties for being caught driving whilst using your phone.

## Accident & Breakdown

Accidents and breakdowns can have serious consequences for your safety – whatever happens never put yourself in danger to move the vehicle.

- Where possible use the hard shoulder, emergency refuge area or a lay-by, and switch on hazard lights
- Exit from the passenger side, away from moving traffic
- If your vehicle is blocking a road or you cannot exit safely, call the police immediately with your location

Read our **How to Report a Road Traffic Incident** factsheet for important tips to help keep you safe, if you are involved in an accident.

## Health

General health is vital to your safety and wellbeing – and drivers are a recognised 'at risk' group.

- Have a balanced diet. Limit fast food. Snack on fruit, and stay hydrated with plenty of water
- Fitness – proven to be a mood lifter
- Take a walk whenever you can & ensure you are active outside of work
- Regular eye tests – road crashes involving a driver with poor vision are estimated to cause thousands of casualties. Look after your sight.

## Personal Safety

Professional drivers can be subject to risks of theft or physical attack, particularly if you have a valuable load. To help keep you safe:

- Always remove keys and lock doors when leaving the vehicle
- Plan your route ahead and keep all documentation about your load out of sight
- Avoid dark, unlit spots when parking, particularly overnight. Use a secure location wherever possible