

Communicating with other Drivers and Pedestrians while Driving

By appropriately using communication, you make it easier for other drivers to see you. You also make it easier for yourself to see other drivers. Ensuring that you can see other drivers and that they can see you will drastically reduce the chance of an accident. The following communication devices are part of your “execution arsenal”:

- **Turn signals** can be used to let other drivers know that you are turning, changing lanes, pulling out of a parking space or pulling out from the curb. You should signal at least four seconds before you plan to take action.
- **Emergency Signals** should be used to warn other drivers that you are experiencing vehicle trouble or when you must park on the shoulder of the roadway for an emergency. This is a warning to other drivers to give you more space.
- The **horn** should be tapped lightly when trying to gain the attention of another driver or pedestrian. It should not be used to vent frustration at other drivers’ actions.
- **Headlights:** Many new trucks have daytime running lights that turn on automatically. These help other drivers see you. You can flash your lights to oncoming traffic to warn them of dangers up ahead such as accidents or obstructions in the roadway.



Turn Signals

Use turn signals first to indicate your intent to change lanes, next visually scan for adjacent traffic and road hazards, and then execute a safe lane change. By signaling your intentions well in advance, you will be in a safer position to communicate with the surrounding drivers, and you will be able to safely execute the desired driving maneuver.

A good safety practice is to signal at least 4 seconds prior to making a turning maneuver.



Did You Know? A recent study reported that there are approximately 630,000 lane-change crashes annually (including both large trucks and passenger vehicles).

While you certainly wouldn't know it from watching the majority of drivers out there, using a turn signal to indicate a lane change is generally the law.

Emergency Signals (4 Ways)

FMCSA 392.22 Emergency signals; stopped commercial motor vehicles.

Whenever a commercial motor vehicle is stopped upon the traveled portion of a highway or the shoulder of a highway for any cause other than necessary traffic stops, the driver of the stopped commercial motor vehicle shall immediately activate the vehicular hazard warning signal flashers and continue the flashing until the driver has placed the warning devices required by CFR 395.22. The flashing signals shall be used during the time the warning devices are picked up for storage before movement of the commercial motor vehicle. The flashing lights may be used at other times while a commercial motor vehicle is stopped in addition to, but not in lieu of, the warning devices required by this section.

Horn



The horn on a commercial motor vehicle is a safety device that can be the sole item that can prevent an accident by sounding an alarm and communicating your presence to another vehicle. However, we all know of drivers that have abused the use of a horn and may in fact cause an accident by startling another motorist. There have been instances of Roadrage documented that all started with the misuse of a horn. The sounding of a horn is one of the few actions taken by a driver that can make an intrusion into the driving compartment of another vehicle. Horns on commercial vehicles vary in size from small electric (city horns) to large exterior mounted chrome trumpeted air horns. Novelty horns are also popular that play familiar tunes to college football fight songs.

So what does the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration say about a horn?

The Answer is found in CFR§393.81 :

Every bus, truck, truck-tractor, and every driven motor vehicle in driveaway-towaway operations shall be equipped with a horn and actuating elements which shall be in such condition as to give an adequate and reliable warning signal.

§393.81 DOT Interpretations

Question 1: Do the FMCSRs specify what type of horn is to be used on a CMV?

Guidance: No.

Question 2: Are there established criteria in the FMCSRs to determine the minimum sound level of horns on CMVs?

Guidance: No.

Question 3: Can I drive my commercial motor vehicle if the horn is not operational?

Answer: NO – CFR§392.7

Equipment, inspection and use.

No commercial motor vehicle shall be driven unless the driver is satisfied that the following parts and accessories are in good working order, nor shall any driver fail to use or make use of such parts and accessories when and as needed:

Service brakes, including trailer brake control, Parking (hand) brake., Steering mechanism, Lighting devices and reflectors, Tires, Horn, Windshield wiper or wipers, Rear-vision mirror or mirrors and Coupling devices.

Headlights

Many companies now have their trucks programmed to have the low beam headlights on anytime the engine is running. Many states have laws that now require headlights to be on any time that windshield wipers are in use. Both of these are good safety practices.

Are your headlights on your truck “fogged” or dirty?

Do you make sure your headlights, turn signals and brake lights are clean during your pre and post trip inspections?

Per the National Institute for Traffic and Highway Safety, the number one reason for severe night time accidents and reduced driving safety is dim or cloudy and improperly lit headlights. If a headlight has ineffective or diminished light output, your night time driving safety is greatly at risk. According to a study by the University of Iowa, a 20 to 50% reduction in headlight output leads to a 90% increase in the possibility of an accident occurring. This is a very unnecessary risk as it is easy to either clean, replace or fix these headlights. *Dim it!*

Q: *Is flashing high beams at cars illegal?*

Someone told me that flashing your headlights at a vehicle in front of you, particularly if it is going slow in the fast lane, is a citable offense. Is this true?

A: Yes, in some states that is true.

The main concern of flashing an oncoming motorist is that they may be temporarily blinded and may create blind spots for other motorists while operating their vehicles, thus creating an obviously hazardous situation.

Have you prepared your terminal facility for the long holiday weekend?

It is not uncommon for thieves to target truck terminals over the holidays as they know it is a good opportunity as there is no one there. Make sure that you take extra precaution to secure the trucks and items of value at your terminal. If your units do not have anti-siphon devices or locking caps instruct the drivers not to fill the units at the end of the day. Make sure that all security alarms are in working order. Walk the perimeter of the lot to make sure that security fencing is in good condition. Move units and all other material such as pallets, tires, etc. far enough away from the fence so they cannot be used to climb on to get over the fence. Consider blocking the entrance and exits to the lot so units cannot be stolen. Throughout the three day weekend assign management personnel to check the terminal randomly. Using a little prevention and common sense can deter a would-be-thief from striking your facility.



Due to the Thanksgiving Day Holiday next week, your next Idealease Safety Bulletin will be sent to you on Friday December 3.

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