



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