

THE FOUR CRITICAL CRASHES

Crashes can result in severe losses and can be catastrophic for everyone involved. Preventing critical crashes, like lane change crashes, loss of control crashes, rear-end crashes, and run-under crashes, requires the driver to recognize hazards that increase the odds of a crash, know the defense, and react properly. Read the information below, and ask yourself how you can improve your vigilance and driving style.

LANE CHANGE CRASHES

A lane change crash occurs when a driver moves into an adjacent lane and strikes another vehicle or object.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Making frequent or abrupt lane changes. Blind spots. Mismanaging the space around the truck. Failing to use turn signals. Failing to use mirrors, keep mirrors clean and adjusted properly.

CRASH-PREVENTION TECHNIQUES: Stay in one lane as much as possible. Make quick glances to mirrors. Keep mirrors clean and properly adjusted. Use the “lean and look” method to monitor blind spots. When exiting, move in the exit lane well in advance and use the turn signal.

LOSS OF CONTROL CRASHES

Loss of control crashes include jackknife accidents, lane departures, rollovers, and steer tire blowouts resulting in losing control of the vehicle and causing a crash.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Losing traction due to wet or dry surfaces (jackknife accidents). Driving when one or more tires are off the road surface (lane departures). Traveling too fast on a ramp or curve (rollovers). Striking a pothole (steer tire blowout).

CRASH-PREVENTION TECHNIQUES: Pre-trip inspections. Observe the proper speed for conditions. Avoid distractions. Be attentive to the road ahead. Know how to straighten the truck if a jackknife occurs.

REAR-END CRASHES

A rear-end crash is when a vehicle does not stop in time to avoid hitting the back of the vehicle directly in front.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Following too closely or tailgating. Speeding. Driving too fast for the conditions. Driving while distracted. Brakes improperly adjusted. Insufficient tire tread depth. Slippery surfaces.

CRASH-PREVENTION TECHNIQUES: Maintain proper following distance. Avoid distractions. Drive 2-3 mph below the flow of traffic, not to exceed the speed limit. Adjust speed to the conditions. Maintain equipment properly.

RUN UNDER CRASHES

A run under crash – including a right-turn squeeze collision – is when a vehicle impacts the side of the truck and runs under the trailer.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Blocking oncoming traffic. Missing reflective tape or malfunctioning trailer lights. Making U-turns or wide right turns. Misjudging the speed of oncoming traffic when turning.

CRASH-PREVENTION TECHNIQUES: Yield to oncoming traffic. Do not make U-turns. Use traffic control assistance and a spotter, if required to back up across travel lanes. Keep the rear of the trailer close to the curb when making a right-hand turn. Time left turns, so the trailer does not block intersections.