

QuickSmarts

Heavy vehicle safety



Driving a heavy vehicle requires extra care and attention on the roads.

The facts

- 80% of fatal multi-vehicle crashes involving a heavy vehicle are not the fault of the heavy vehicle¹.
- Not all road users understand how to interact with heavy vehicles.

In 2017:

- 33 people died on Queensland roads from crashes involving heavy vehicles².
- 443 people were seriously injured as a result of crashes involving heavy vehicles in Queensland³.

Driver fatigue can be deadly

Driver fatigue or drowsy driving is a safety hazard for the road transport industry. The main causes of fatigue are:

- not enough sleep
- driving at night (when you should be asleep)
- working or being awake for a long time.

Did you know that being awake for about 17 hours has a similar effect on performance as having a blood alcohol content of 0.052?⁴

Fatigue doesn't only relate to falling asleep at the wheel – even brief lapses in concentration can have serious consequences.

Watch for the warning signs

It's important to recognise the warning signs of fatigue and to stop driving and take a break⁴.

Your Body:

- A lack of alertness
- Inability to concentrate
- Making more mistakes than usual
- Drowsiness, falling asleep or micro-sleeps
- Difficulty keeping your eyes open
- Not feeling refreshed after a sleep
- Excessive head nodding or yawning
- Blurred vision
- Mood changes
- Changes to personal health or fitness

Your Vehicle:

- Near miss or incident
- Not keeping in a single lane
- Not maintaining a constant speed
- Overshooting a sign or line
- Poor gear changes

Work and rest requirements

Heavy vehicle drivers must comply with certain rest limits. The Heavy Vehicle National Law sets three work and rest options:

1. Standard hours
2. Basic Fatigue Management (BFM hours)
3. Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM hours)

For more information visit:

<https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/work-and-rest-requirements>.

Rest areas

There are currently 200 heavy vehicle rest areas throughout Queensland, 115 of these are for heavy vehicles only.

For more information visit:

<https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/guide-to-queensland-roads>

RestSpace is an app (available on Android and IOS) to help heavy vehicle drivers find rest areas as they plan their journey. The app features a database of Queensland rest areas and allows users to access images and information.

Download it here:

<http://www.restspace.com.au/>

Health and wellbeing

As a professional heavy vehicle driver, maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be challenging. Due to the nature of your job, you face an increased risk of health problems associated with poor diet and a lack of exercise.

You also have a higher chance of developing mental health conditions such as depression which may lead to the abuse of legal, prescription and/or illicit substances. Research shows that drivers experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety are almost 30% more likely to abuse substances.

For more information about healthy eating, exercise and a range of programs and resources to support you in achieving your goals visit: <https://www.healthier.qld.gov.au/get-started/>

Seatbelts

Seatbelts vs. Air Bags – Air bags are designed to work with seatbelts, not replace them. In fact if you don't wear your seatbelt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag which may seriously injure or even kill you.

- Heavy vehicle drivers involved in a crash are six times more likely to die if they're not wearing a seatbelt
- Without a seatbelt, you have a greater chance of being knocked unconscious and suffering more severe injuries
- Seatbelt design regulations have been improved to make seatbelts more comfortable in heavy vehicles
- A properly adjusted seatbelt should be comfortable and not limit movement or restrict vision
- Seatbelts are mandatory in all heavy vehicles and your employer must provide a safe work environment under workplace health and safety and chain of responsibility obligations.

1. Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD. Unpublished data extracted 27 June 2018 using road casualty statistics 2013-2017.
2. Williamson, A. M. and Feyer, A. M. (2000). 'Moderate sleep deprivation produces impairments in cognitive and motor performance equivalent to legally prescribed levels of alcohol intoxication.' *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 57(10): 649-655.
3. Horne, J. A. and Reyner, L.A. (1995) 'Sleep related vehicle accidents.' *BMJ* 310(6979): 565-567.
4. Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD, unpublished. Data extracted 27 June 2018 using road casualty statistics 2013-2017.

5. Department of Transport and Main Roads QLD. (2015). 'Analysis of the distance from origin of journey to crash location for fatigued drivers' (Rqc20238), unpublished
6. Eating healthy and living healthy, <https://www.drivinghealthy.org/eatingandlivinghealthy/>, 2018
7. Improving the health of Australia's truck drivers, <https://www.headsup.org.au/training-and-resources/news/2014/10/30/improving-the-health-of-australia-s-truck-drivers>, 2014
8. Seatbelts and restraints: Get the facts, <https://jointhedrive.qld.gov.au/seatbelts-and-restraints/factsheet>, 2018
9. Truckies Belt up brochure, Department of Transport and Main Roads.

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