

# SAFETY GAZETTE

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 *Challenges of Trucks and Pedestrians*
- 3 *Distracted Teenage Drivers and Truckers Sharing the Road*
- 4 *Golf Cart Safety*



## Challenges of Trucks and Pedestrians

by Nancy Ross-Anderson, Loss Control Specialist

We are all pedestrians at one time or another in our lives. The good news is that just as truck crash rates have fallen steadily over the past few decades, pedestrian deaths also have dropped. In 1975, there were 7,516 pedestrian deaths in the U.S.; that number declined to 4,735 in 2013.

This long-term improvement is due to three main factors.

1. Engineering: better designed crosswalks, lower speed limits and safer walkways in urban areas.
2. Education: people - especially children - are better informed on safe pedestrian practices such as using crosswalks and wearing bright clothing.
3. Law Enforcement: pedestrians who practice unsafe behaviors are warned or cited.

Though improvements have been made, truckers face special challenges when dealing with pedestrians. When trucks drive in cities or on roads with pedestrians nearby, it is often harder to see them due to blind spots and the higher seating position in a truck. Added mirrors and blind spot windows on passenger doors can help, but it's still difficult at times to see all around. Because of this, truckers need to be especially cautious when maneuvering in areas with pedestrians.

One high-risk area is truck stops. While some are well laid out, with adequate lighting and safe walking areas, many are poorly designed. Some have tight parking spots or no markings indicating where to park, causing those on foot to be hard to see. Also, as those who drive trucks know, many truck stops are full to capacity, causing some to park along nearby roads or exit ramps. In addition, many of the pedestrians are other drivers who are exhausted after a long day of work, so they may not be fully alert.

Loading docks are another risky area for pedestrians. Many dock workers have been injured or killed by trucks backing to the docks. While it seems like that should never happen, pedestrians get distracted and drivers neglect to make sure it's safe to back up.

To avoid hitting a pedestrian, take these tips into account:

1. Stay alert. Make sure you use all available resources such as mirrors and spot windows when around pedestrians.
2. Slow down! In congested areas such as truck stops,

it's important to move slowly and cautiously.

3. Wait before backing up. Use a spotter if available or get out and look behind the vehicle. Using four-way flashers can also help alert pedestrians that you are moving.

If you follow these tips on maneuvering around pedestrians, you can avoid a potentially disastrous injury.

Sources: Governor's Highway Safety Association ([www.gsha.org](http://www.gsha.org)) and National Highway Traffic Safety Association ([www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov))





## Distracted Teenage Drivers and Truckers Sharing the Road

by Dewayne Reeder, Loss Control Specialist

Mark Twain is credited with this bit of advice on parenting, "When a child turns seven, put them in a barrel and feed them through a knot hole. When they turn thirteen, plug the hole." Twain's wit may have made sense in his day; however, nowadays, we all know the teen bursts from the barrel at age 16 with car keys in hand, READY TO DRIVE.

With all the distractions surrounding our society, especially the youth, these blunt statistics related to teen accidents and fatalities are no surprise:

- There are 9.4 million young adults between the ages of 16-24 driving on the highways. They make up only 4.7% of the total number of licensed drivers but are involved in 10.1% of fatal accidents and in 13.5% of all accidents.
- Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death worldwide among young people aged 10-24 years. Each year nearly 400,000 people under 25 die on the world's roads – on average more than 1,000 a day. (World Health Organization)
- During the four summer months in May through August, nearly twice the number of youth die on our roads – an average of nearly 16 deaths per day (15.9) – compared to an average of nearly nine deaths (8.8) per day during the year. (2009 FARS data for 15-19 year-old fatalities)
- Six of the top seven deadliest days for youth occur in May, June, July and August.

Accident analysis shows that nearly 70% of traffic crashes involving large trucks and passenger cars are the fault of the car driver. Defensive driving teaches other drivers to watch out for the "other guy" no matter what; however, young drivers do not have a flashing light or sign that warns truckers that they are near, and potentially distracted. Only sometimes are we aware that a distracted teen driver or other problem driver is near. Some ways to be aware of distracted drivers include:

- Increased attention on Friday and Saturday when more distracted driving fatalities occur.
- Being aware of young adult attractions such as sport events, concert agendas, and popular recreational areas.

Teen drivers typically make the same mistakes as other drivers, but don't always have the experience to foresee the potential problem or the skills to correct the event. Even though teen driver education has improved over the years, there is little assurance that the teen, or other

driver, will make good decisions.

The Teens & Trucks training program created by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance is one good example. Although we cannot control the other driver's decisions, we can react and adjust in a way to avoid a crash.

The following points are given in the Teens & Trucks program:

- **Don't Cut Off Trucks.** Total stopping distance is very different for a large truck than a passenger car.
- **Stay Out of the Truck's Blind Spots/NO Zones.** Trucks have very large blind spots. Do not stay in a truck's blind spots.
- **Keep a Safe Distance.** While it is never safe to tail-gate any vehicle on the highway, following too close is particularly dangerous around large trucks and buses because the size of these vehicles prevents you from seeing the road ahead and having sufficient time to react to slowing or stopped traffic or another obstacle.
- **Trucks Make Wide Turns.** Because of their large size, remember that a truck making a right turn may first swing left to clear the corner. Conversely, a truck making a left turn may first swing right to clear vehicles and other objects on its left side. Expect this and be prepared!

No driver, regardless of how professional they are, will be able to control the other driver. As a professional, we can be prepared by driving defensively. Look at the list again and remember that all the risk of a crash presented by the other drivers can be significantly reduced by one simple goal: Controlling your own vehicle space.





## Golf Cart Safety

by Chris Parker, Loss Control Specialist

Golf carts have become a convenient – and in some cases necessary – form of transportation for many companies. To prevent workplace accidents, all employees who operate golf carts must be trained before using the vehicles. This training should include the proper procedures for operating and maintaining the vehicles used in conjunction with the golf cart operational manuals.

### THE FUNDAMENTALS

1. Never drive recklessly or joy ride. Drive courteously. Obey all vehicle traffic laws and rules of the road.
2. Never drive intoxicated or under the influence of any drug or narcotic.
3. Avoid distractions while operating the golf cart just as you would in an automobile. Be safe and attentive -- avoid talking, texting, or reading while driving, reaching for objects, applying makeup or eating.
4. Golf carts should be equipped with seat belts for driver and all passengers. The driver and all occupants should utilize available seatbelts anytime the vehicle is in use.
5. Only carry the number of passengers for which there are seats.
6. Drivers and all passengers should keep all body parts (arms, legs, and feet) inside cart while vehicle is in motion, except when signaling a turn.
7. Do not allow anyone to ride standing in the vehicle or on the back platform of the vehicle. Do not put vehicle in motion until all passengers are safely seated inside vehicle.
8. Operate the vehicle from the driver's side only.
9. Always use hand signals to indicate your intent to turn due to the small size and limited visibility of the turn signals on a golf cart.
10. Check blind spots before turning. When making a left-hand turn, yield to the thru traffic lane and merge into that lane before turning left. Never make a left-hand turn from the golf cart lane.
11. Carefully turn and look behind golf cart before backing up.
12. Avoid sharp turns at maximum speed and drive straight up and down slopes to reduce the risk of passenger ejections and/or rollover. Avoid excessive speed, sudden starts, stops and fast turns.
13. Reduce speed due to driving conditions, especially hills or other inclines or declines, blind corners, intersections, pedestrians and inclement weather.
14. Do not leave keys in golf cart while unattended and make sure the parking brake is set.
15. Always yield to pedestrians and be cognizant of motor vehicles.
16. Use extreme caution in inclement weather. Although a golf cart may shield you from the rain, it may not protect you from a lightning strike.



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