



Safety Scene

Uh Oh! How to Prevent Delivery Accidents

by Molly E. Butz

Getting from Point A to Point B safely!



When we discuss component manufacturing safety we often focus on the folks that work in and around the manufacturing facility. However, the necessity to get the finished components to their final destination is a good reminder that at least a percentage of your workforce is asked to perform tasks, such as delivery, outside of the building and grounds. The main objective for a company truck driver should be to get from Point A to Point B and back with truck and cargo intact and in a safe manner. Unfortunately, even when a great deal of care is taken to avoid them, accidents occasionally occur.

Delivering components must be a calculated undertaking, from understanding the limitations of the delivery vehicle to properly loading and securing the cargo. Here are some tips for minimizing your risk of having an accident and the 411 on how to correctly handle the situation if you are involved in an accident.

The commercial motor vehicles (CMV) used in deliveries have limitations. They're big, heavy and, without proper training, can be difficult to maneuver. Sharpening your accelerating, stopping, steering, reversing and turning skills plays a big part in properly handling a loaded delivery truck. And, because of their size and design, CMVs often have one or more large blind spot(s). Other motorists will likely be unaware of your limitations, so it will be up to you to leave ample room for negotiating your vehicle.

It will also be to your advantage to plan ahead. Charting out your route (and possibly an alternative) before you leave the facility will ensure you know where you're headed and allow you to pay attention to more critical items such as traffic signals and signs rather than trying to read a map. Start with any of several online mapping sites, such as Google Maps (maps.google.com). Keeping your delivery vehicle in good condition is also crucial, and routine preventative maintenance along with a thorough inspection before you leave the facility will help ensure that you and your cargo arrive safely.

Always wear your seatbelt.

If An Accident Occurs

Even if you're sure to follow all of the rules of the road and plan ahead, sometimes an accident occurs. Here's the low-down on the things you should—and shouldn't—do to make certain the situation is handled safely and that you are not unjustly declared at fault.

Immediately following an accident, take a moment to assess whether you have been seriously hurt. Try to remember if you bumped your head and take stock of your whole body; broken bones aren't always obvious. If you think you may have a back or neck injury, don't move; for any other injuries, move only far enough to dial your cell phone or contact the authorities on your CB and request an ambulance. Stay put until the emergency response team arrives unless you determine it will put you at risk for greater injury. (If you see fire, smoke or spilled fuel, request fire department assistance as well.)

If you conclude that you're not seriously injured, do your best to move your vehicle out of the flow of traffic, being careful to choose a position that doesn't create more

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at a glance

- When delivering components, understand the limitations of the vehicle and properly load and secure the cargo.
- Gather as much information as you can from accident scene.
- Take pictures with a digital camera or camera phone, and get names and contact information from eyewitnesses.



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Safety Scene

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damage or put anyone at risk. Take this time to determine your location using landmarks and signs and make a mental note of which street you're on and the direction you were traveling at the time of the accident and *then* call the authorities. Here it's important to note that you should *never* leave the scene of an accident as doing so may subject you to criminal responsibility. If you do not have a cell phone or CB or neither is working, ask a bystander to call for you.

Minimizing Further Risk

To prevent more accidents from occurring, protect the accident scene when it's practical. Set out flares or another appropriate warning to alert motorists and use a spill kit to contain fuel and other fluids as long as doing so does not put you or others at greater risk. If possible, take the opportunity to photograph the scene of the accident, but only if you can do it safely.

When the authorities arrive, it's best to be polite and cooperative. Do your best to answer all of their questions to the best of your ability, keeping in mind that "anything you say can and will be held against you in a court of law" in the event the accident leads to future litigation. Avoid arguing with the officers and other drivers involved; your behavior can have an impact on how the incident is documented. Reacting by placing blame or taking responsibility are equally dangerous, as you may do yourself and/or your company serious harm.

As much as possible, try to get the names, addresses and phone numbers of every person involved in the accident, as well as their vehicle license numbers and insurance information. You'll also want to get a variety of information about the actual incident (see below). Be sure you report the accident to your terminal manager, dispatcher or supervisor as soon as possible and avoid talking to anyone else about the accident except police officers, a representative of your company, your company's attorney or a properly identified representative of your insurance company. And last but not least, it's important to note that you should not, under any circumstance, sign anything except an official police report.

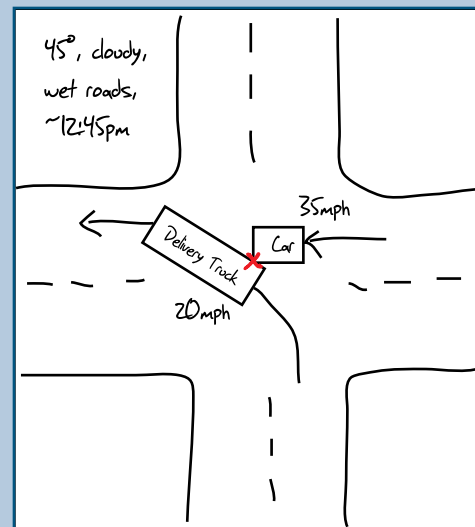
Being in an accident can be very scary. However, if you take a few deep breaths, cooperate with the authorities and write down as much information as you can remember you'll be well on your way to getting the incident taken care of in the best manner possible. And keep driving safely, responsibly and defensively! Safety first! **SBC**

Collecting Information at the Scene

The more information you can gather at the scene of an accident the better. If it's possible, make a quick sketch of the mishap. Include the following items to the best of your ability:

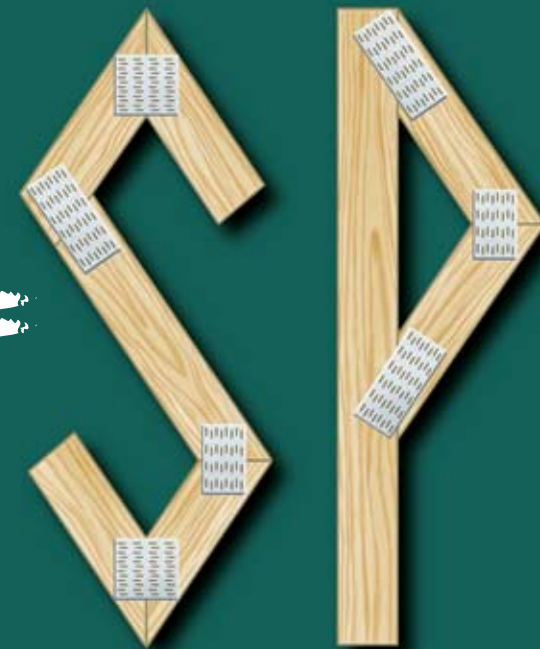
- Points of impact of all vehicles involved
- Directions of movement and speeds prior to the accident
- Weather conditions
- Road conditions
- Time of day

Take pictures with a digital camera or camera phone if you have one, and get names and contact information from any possible eyewitnesses.



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