

5 Safety Tips To Keep Truck Drivers (and Their Cargo) Safe

During training, every professional driver learns how to stay out of harm's way while behind the wheel of their rig. But what's less known are the steps truck drivers can take to protect themselves and their cargo when they're outside of the vehicle.

Cargo theft costs fleets up to \$35 billion annually, according to [National Insurance Crime Bureau](#) data, and with incidents on the rise, truck drivers are a target. Use these tips to secure your cargo and keep yourself safe inside and outside the truck.

1. Park in a safe place. Plan breaks at well-lit truck stops, rest areas and authorized truck parking areas that are secured and monitored. Choose parking spots close to security cameras, near the truck stop entrance and within sight of other parked trucks. Back your truck into a parking space whenever possible so you can depart quickly and easily as needed.

2. Lock up your truck. Always lock your doors, even if you're just stopping to get coffee or use the restroom. Never leave your truck running with the doors open. Store valuables in places where people walking by won't see them. Keep windows rolled up while parked. Double-check that cargo doors are locked and sealed. And always stay with your truck while it's being loaded and unloaded.

3. Wear the right safety vest. All professional drivers should wear an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-certified, high-visibility safety vest whenever they're outside the truck. Vests are categorized into three classes based on the amount of yellow or orange fabric and reflective material.

- **Class 1 vests** are for drivers in low-traffic areas where speeds are 25 mph or lower.
- **Class 2 vests** are for drivers transporting goods on roads where speeds are between 25 – 50 mph.
- **Class 3 vests** are for drivers carrying freight on roads where speeds exceed 50 mph.



4. Check in often. Notify someone you know and trust — dispatch, a family member or a friend — whenever you stop your truck so they can find you in an emergency. Check in a second time right before you restart your route.

5. Trust your instincts. When stopping, scan the area for signs of suspicious activity, such as broken lighting, a lack of security or a group of people hanging around near trucks. If anything seems dangerous, leave the area and proceed to the next truck stop or rest area. Remember to always report suspicious or illegal behavior to local officials.

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is a summary. It is provided for general information purposes by Penske and is not a comprehensive review of all the information in applicable regulations and guidance. This information should not be used as a substitute for professional services or legal advice. Penske does not warrant the information contained herein, or the accuracy of the information for any purpose. If legal advice is required, you should obtain the services of a licensed attorney.