

# We're all Going on a Summer Holiday!



**TruckSure**  
By Trevor Toohill

Hard to believe but it's December already. The schools are breaking up for the holidays and the party season is already evident.

Transporters are flat out with the delivery of everything that can be eaten, played with, or worn, and joy of joys the idiots come out to fool around with their toys. Slow drivers, fast drivers, young drivers, the olds and the visitors will all be out enjoying the days off and the long hours of daylight saving.

All of these pose a number of different hazards on the roads as both the volume of drivers increase along with the less experienced in handling our highways. The amateur driver mixing it with the professional. The holiday cruiser going nowhere and everywhere up against the big rig going somewhere.

Summer driving needs you to be alert to a completely contrasting range of challenges to those faced by truckies who have exited a pretty icy and windy winter.

I produced a winter item for Truck Journal highlighting that season's hazards and I thought it wouldn't hurt to give a few tips for summer driving.

Probably a bit like telling your grandmother how to suck eggs really, but as usual I only have your best interests at heart and the motivation is to get you all home safely and to avoid accidents and expensive insurance increases. So here goes for my pearls of wisdom!

- Be aware of the increased volume of traffic – families on holiday, visitors in the campervan. Distracted, perhaps lost and eyes on the GPS, road signs, or worse, ear to the phone – yeah I know it's illegal! But...
- Road repairs and new construction are in full swing in the summer season. Be prepared and plan for delays. Rely on your colleagues to alert you to these areas and in particular to any long delays and stoppages. Your driver association keeps you well informed of any pending roadwork. Being aware means you can plan an alternate route or at least accept the delays.
- Increase your attention to your blind spots. Casual road users will not be aware of your blind spots let alone how to avoid them.
- Passing lanes – be prepared for the driver in a hurry who guns it to get in front of you at the end of the merging lanes and cuts in front of you at the last possible moment. You have seen it happen. You know it is going to happen again. Be prepared to back off and leave aggression and frustration to someone else. Resist the urge to overtake a marginally slower vehicle and thus hog the fast lane – it will lead to others taking additional risks to get passed you.
- Stick to the speed limit and recommendations, wear your seatbelt and put your cellphone out of reach. Only use your mobile with a hands free device and even then sparingly – it will still distract you.
- Keep in-cab distractions to a minimum – set your Bluetooth, pre tune your radio and stack your CDs. Have snacks and

water but avoid eating meals at the wheel. Stop to eat and smoke at truckstops, and take a stroll while you are stopped.

- Increased police patrols are evident and active. Do not attract attention with minor infringements. Perform a thorough pre trip inspection paying particular attention to the obvious – lights, brakes, load, and tyres along with the usual. Any minor vehicle or driving infringement will mean a long stop and detailed inspection – not worth the aggravation.
- Make sure you are well rested and your log book is up to date.
- The agriculture season is in full swing and sheep and cattle are being moved. Slow moving harvesting and over dimension machinery, farm tractors and bikes are out on the rural highways. Watch out negotiating blind and narrow roads.
- Motorbikes!!!! You can't see them at the best of times and the riders all seem to want to kill themselves. Experienced or first trippers want that lead – give it to them with plenty of room. It does make you shiver and you know you will see another mangled bike – just make sure you are not part of the action. Don't cut corners as you are aware bikers are centerliners at best and in your space at worst.

Well that's about it from me for this time. I hope you have enjoyed my contributions to Truck Journal during the year and I look forward to continuing to produce articles of interest again next year.

The team here at TruckSure wish you all the very best for a happy and safe Christmas and a very well deserved holiday break.

Cheers! 



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*'You sit behind the wheel – we stand behind the truck'*