# Driving Blind Spots Toolbox Talk

A blind spot is any area that a driver cannot see when either looking ahead or when checking side and rear view mirrors. The main blind spots on vehicles are often obscured by the vehicle’s bodywork, window pillars and head restraints.

Blind spots can occur on all sides of any vehicle, whether the vehicle is stationary or in transit, and the larger a vehicle is the larger and more numerous blind spots can be. It is vitally important that drivers are aware of the potential dangers of blind spots around their vehicle and how to safely manoeuvre whilst proactively managing blind spots.

## Blind Spots and specific vehicle manoeuvres

Blind spots vary according to the vehicle being driven and the specific manoeuvres they make.

**Pulling away at a junction –** the blind spot is right in front at bonnet level and below. The height of your vehicle will dictate the size of this blind spot area. Caution is necessary especially at pedestrian crossings and care should be taken if young children are using the crossing as they will be below bonnet height of many large vehicles.

**Turning at a junction –** the side pillars of the windscreen and at the side of the vehicle cause blind spots. Drivers’ should move their head and body to double check over their shoulders for any pedestrians or obstructions at ground level.

**Reversing vehicles –** rear view blind spot. Check for pedestrians and obstructions behind the boot and vehicle sides by firstly walking around your vehicle prior to commencing reversing manoeuvres. Where fitted make use of reversing sensors and cameras.

**Overtaking and Lane Changing –** multiple blind spots at sides of vehicle, side of windscreen pillars, rear view and rear window pillars. Utilise all mirrors and cameras or sensors if fitted to your vehicle. Look back over your shoulder prior to indicating a manoeuvre.

Some of you will be driving vehicles with particular safety features added, and this gives you an advantage in proactively managing road risks but you also have added responsibility for utilising these features, which could include:

1. Close Proximity Warning Systems that alert you and other road users when the vehicle is turning left. Sensors alert all parties and are excellent for enhanced safety in urban areas.
2. External Front Mounted Side and Rear Facing CCTV cameras that alert you to other road users and covers the near side blind spot.
3. Fresnel Lenses that provide you with a downwards view close to the passenger door, a common blind spot accounting for many incidents between lorries and cyclists.
4. Remember to use the DOBLI Mirrors that will have been fitted to your truck to minimise the blind spots to the side and front corner of the passenger door or your vehicle. Both mirrors should extend your area of vision by a 300 mm radius.

However, there can still be blind spots that hide pedestrians and cyclists from view and drivers of HGV’s should especially avoid having curtains in their cabs and items on the dashboard that hinder a clear view from the driver’s seat.

All fleet drivers should be proficient in manoeuvring their vehicles, including checking blind spots, and have relevant safety training and additional equipment fitted to eliminate blind spots as necessary.

Vehicles that regularly travel to town centres, on residential streets, at bus stations and building sites etc. and are over 3.5 tonnes are particularly at risk of confronting busy roads and other road users. Those of you who drive on these high risk roads should be particularly of checking you blind spot when driving.

## Key points to remember

* Drivers must conduct regular vehicle safety checks, especially focusing on their vehicle’s mirror placement and keeping mirrors clean
* Drivers should complete a regular vehicle manoeuvre driving test to assess their safety and reinforce the importance of checking blind spots when driving and parking up

# Drivers’ discussion questions

1. Are you aware of any blind spots on your vehicle?
2. Has your vehicle been fitted with any additional mirrors, Fresnel lens, cameras or sensors? Do you feel some or all of these measures should be considered for your vehicle?
3. Were you aware of the dangers of vehicle blind spots when driving and the importance of safe vehicle manoeuvring?

Comments:

Date:

Meeting conducted by:

Attendees

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