



Safety Talk – Safe Vehicle Positioning



Many employees in every occupation may at some point have to drive a commonwealth vehicle to a facility or an active work site where there could be several hazards. Construction and maintenance employees find themselves in active construction or maintenance work zones. Design employees and summer interns also use state vehicles to complete surveying and inspection activities on busy roadways. This safety talk is intended to review safe vehicle positioning when using commonwealth vehicles and equipment in various work activities. Below are general safety tips for all.

Active Work Zones/Construction Sites/Stockpile:

- 1. Communicate your visit with the site foreman/manager.** This allows site personnel to know ahead of time that an additional vehicle will be entering the work area that employees may not normally recognize.
- 2. Review entry and parking procedures and hazards in advance.** Ask the work site supervisor where to park in the safest and best place. In some cases, it may be better to park in an identified parking area close to the job site and enter on foot.
- 3. Get permission to enter the area.** Once you arrive at the work location, find someone who can provide you with directions to safe parking and for navigating through the work site. Follow their instructions.
- 4. Read and follow all signage.** Even if you are given verbal instructions, also pay attention to traffic signs within construction sites or work zones.
- 5. Never park directly behind construction vehicles or equipment.** These vehicles and equipment are subject to move without warning. Additionally, they have limited rear view visibility. If you pull directly into their blind spots, they may not know you are there and could back into your vehicle. Remember if you cannot see their mirrors, they can't see you.
- 6. Find a low traffic area or an employee parking area.** Workers usually park their personal vehicles in the safest areas. Find out where these areas are and park in that location.
- 7. Use equipped vehicle lighting to increase visibility.** Engage all permanent lighting to help increase visibility. Attach and use all temporary lighting devices to help increase visibility.

Field Survey/Inspecting activities

- 1. Pre-plan your trip.** Know what type of road on which you will be driving prior to arriving. Identify and plan to use any safe pull off areas or side roads to keep you and the vehicle safe.
- 2. Engage all lighting and hazard lights.** This helps increase your visibility to surrounding traffic. This includes using daytime running lights and 4-way flashers to communicate to other drivers.

- 3. Use identified, safe cross over locations or identified staging areas.** Using a state vehicle allows you to be authorized to utilize certain areas such as cross overs, turnback areas, and other areas just off the right of way that are away from hazards and vehicles. This may be a better option than the shoulder.
- 4. Find a low traffic area or an area off the main road.** There may be side roads or identified parking areas that can be used. Research those areas prior to setting out on your trip.

General Safety Tips for All

- 1. Always wear your seat belt.** Whether the vehicle is moving or if you are in a stopped vehicle inside of a work zone, keep your seat belt on.
- 2. Always wear your high visibility PPE.** Have your hard hat nearby and make sure to put it on before you get out of the vehicle. If you have a vest, a good rule of thumb is to put it on before leaving for your destination. This also is true for proper foot attire. Regardless of location, if you are exposed to moving vehicles or equipment, your PPE should be worn to increase visibility. Even at a stockpile location, high visibility apparel should be worn.
- 3. Always come to work fit for duty.** Employees working along the roadside or within work zones or construction sites must use all their senses and faculties. Employees must not be impaired in anyway. This means not being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances and being well enough to perform work duties.
- 4. Do not use handheld devices.** Do not text and drive. This is also a common work policy within the construction and maintenance industry. Additionally, do not text and walk while in work zones and construction sites or walking along the roadway. Stay alert, keep your head up, look around, and listen. Keep your head on a swivel constantly scanning the area and looking over your shoulder. When possible, walk toward traffic to see and be seen by oncoming vehicles.
- 5. Always do a circle of safety before moving.** No matter what vehicle or equipment you may be using, a circle of safety should be done before moving it, especially if it has been idle for an extended period of time. Unless you **Get Out And Look** you will not know if conditions have changed. Someone could have pulled directly behind you and be in your blind spot, or someone could have placed a power or hand tool next to the vehicle without your knowledge. This is an all too frequent occurrence at work locations.

These safety tips can be used by all employees using commonwealth vehicles or equipment and should be utilized as much as possible. By taking the extra time to initiate some of these tips, they can assist with decreasing unwanted incidents and injuries.