

## Log Truck Visibility

---

Visibility is a major contributing factor in accidents involving log trucks and one of the first issues cited after an accident by the monitoring public. Recent accidents involving log trucks have, in part, been attributed to the lack of reflective tape on the trailers, especially during dawn and dusk operations. Motorists have stated that it can be hard to see log trailers when they turn in front of them. This can make it difficult to judge clearances and safe stopping distances. In some cases, trailers that were parked on the side of the road were hit and the motorist claimed they were not able to see the trailer or the logs extending from the trailer.

The National Traffic Highway Safety Administration (NTHSA) completed a study of the impact of using reflective tape on trailers in 2001, and concluded that the consistent use of such reflective material would prevent over 7,800 accidents per year and 191 fatalities. According to the NTHSA, "The tape is quite effective. It reduced side and rear impacts into trailers, in dark conditions (including "dark-not-lighted," "dark-lighted," "dawn," and "dusk") by 29 percent. In "dark-not-lighted" conditions, the tape reduced side and rear impact crashes by 41 percent. Tape is especially effective in reducing injury crashes. In dark conditions, it reduced side and rear impacts that resulted in fatalities or injuries to drivers of any vehicle by 44 percent."

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) in CFR 393.11 sets forth the requirements for Conspicuity Systems on Trailers. Review of the complete requirements can be found at [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#). The regulation provides that all trailers be equipped with reflective tape along each side of the trailer and across the rear. The affixed tape on the side must be equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the overall length of the trailer. In the instance of log trailers, normally measuring 42 feet in length there should be 21 feet of tape along each side of the trailer. The tape should be spread out along the length of the trailer in equal parts. Tape should be placed across the length of the rear of the trailer. While minimum requirements are set forth in the regulation, make trucks and trailers as visible as possible at all times as a best practice. To accomplish this, it is recommended that all trailers are equipped with:

- Operable Lights and Reflectors
- Conspicuity Tape along each side and rear of the trailer
- Conspicuity Tape up the length of each bolster on each side of the trailer
- Drivers should be required to drive with the lights on at all times
- Reflector triangles should always be used when the truck is parked on the side of a roadway for any reason

Fleet safety policies should be reviewed and revised to reflect these requirements. Drivers should be trained and required to turn headlights on before moving the truck. Driving with the lights on at all times has been found to improve visibility of the truck and trailer. Drivers should be retrained on the daily required inspection procedures with emphasis on the visibility of the truck and trailer. Drivers should also be required to stop and dismount to check securement of the load and lights prior to entering the public roadway system each time they are leaving the woods.



Other ways to reduce the potential for accidents with a fleet is to ensure signs are posted on each side of the entrance to the jobsite to warn motorists that a log truck may be entering and exiting the area. Drivers should be reminded to ensure proper distances are available before entering the public roadway system. Left turns should be avoided as much as possible, when necessary; drivers should wait for enough room to complete the turn before other oncoming traffic reaches them. Drivers should be reminded of the dangers of tail swing while making right hand turns and the fact that logs can extend beyond the rear of the trailer.

The best method of accident avoidance is to provide training to your drivers on a regular basis. Training specific to the logging industry has been developed by [TEAM Safe Trucking](#), drivers may complete the available courses online as a refresher to enhance their skills and as remedial training when you find it beneficial.

Additional information on safe driving and accident prevention is available from the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), the [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#), the [Everest Insurance Loss Control](#) site or by contacting Everest's Loss Control Department at (800) 269-6660 or [loss.control@everestire.com](mailto:loss.control@everestire.com).

Loss Control is a daily responsibility of your individual management. This publication is not a substitute for your own loss control program. The information contained in this document including claim information, best practices, and recommendations has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable and is intended to be descriptive and for general informational purposes only. This document should not be considered as all encompassing, or suitable for all situations, conditions, or environments. Each organization is responsible for implementing their own safety, injury, and illness prevention program and should consult with legal, medical, technical, or other advisors to reaffirm the information contained in this Best Practice. The information contained in this publication is intended for general informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute legal advice or opinions. You should contact an attorney if you need legal advice or if you have any questions concerning your obligations under any law, statute or code identified in this publication.