

The Rock Solid News

LITTLE ROCK FARM *Trucking*



Marks Message - Tools of the Trade

Any tradesman worth his "salt" has top notch tools relative to his trade.

If you're a good cook, you want good pots and pans. If you're a good carpenter, you need woodworking tools to help you get the end results you want. If you're a mechanic, you want the right tools enabling you to get the job done the quickest easiest way.

Being a truck driver should be no different. With winter and cold weather approaching fast, make sure you have the proper "tools"!

A Story

It was about 8pm and I was heading westbound out of Winnipeg heading for Edmonton. It was already bitterly cold. The billowing white smoke left the stack and fell immediately down each side of the trailer.

Soon, I noticed the truck wasn't pulling like it should.

At first I thought maybe my little 350 Cummins was just getting tired...then noticed the transmission and rear end temperatures weren't even registering on the gauges! The oil was thick as molasses and it was taking a lot of engine horsepower just to turn the gears!

By the time I hit Brandon the defroster was having trouble keeping the windows clear. I draped a blanket over my legs to keep warm...the heater couldn't keep up. I was getting nervous. It was eerily cold, something I hadn't experienced before.

It was about midnight when I made it to the scale at Moosomin SK. I wheeled in thinking I would grab a few hours sleep and see if it would warm up.

I had laid down for about 15 minutes when I heard the engine shutter to a stop. I knew right away what was wrong, and knew

I had to get it solved before the cold played its nasty tricks.

I jumped out and froze my ears and nose in about 2 minutes exposure. I got the fuel filter off, got some fuel out of the tank, filled the filter up and twisted it back on. That took about 15 minutes. I cranked the engine...after about 2 minutes of cranking on and off the battery died.

Long story short, I hitched a ride into town and got a motel...even the motel room was cold. Next morning, when we went to tow the truck, the steering box froze solid. We couldn't even turn the steering wheel! 3 out of the 4 batteries were froze and split open!

I say all that to say this. Be prepared. One never knows what will be encountered during the trip. Carry good warm clothing...carry tools. You just may save your own life.

Happy Thanksgiving

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more.

It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity.

It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

--Melody Beattie

By The End Of October...

By the end of October, we could start to see rain turn into snow flakes and ice forming on the roads. It makes for challenging driving conditions.

Hats and gloves are part of your outdoor wear. We want to use this newslet-

ter to talk about winter driving and safety. Sounds too early, truth is... it's best to be prepared before it comes than to realize in the middle of a jackknifing situation that different decisions can be made in

order to prevent yourself from ending up in a ditch, rolling over, or injuring yourself or others.

Mother nature can throw some adverse weather at us, but we can fight back by adjusting our reactions to match.

Another Canadian Winter Ahead—EH!

Here we go again, another Canadian winter lies directly ahead and our drivers are put to extra challenges. We are professional drivers after all, but the first snow fall reveals all the newbie drivers and drivers who have forgotten all about ice and snow conditions.

Plan Ahead

The key is to plan ahead. We live in a region between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. We obviously receive a great deal of lake affect snow in the beginning of the winter season before the lakes freeze over. No matter where the wind is coming from, we are usually in the direct path of some nasty snow squalls or blizzard conditions.

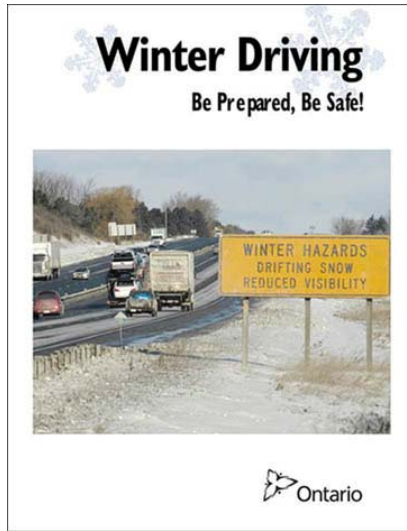
Some drivers like to leave at the very last possible moment but don't consider that the skies may be sunny and blue over Walkerton but a little bit east of here will be grey with white out conditions blowing over Lake Huron. Their appointment times are late, they are stuck behind slow traffic, or have decided to speed up to race the clock but put their safety and everyone else's on the road as well.

It requires drivers to think ahead about their route, listening to their radios, watching television before departure, and relaying information back and forth with dispatchers.

Slowing Er Down

Driving to match the conditions of the road is an absolute must. Look for signs of ice with wetness and reflections on the road.

What can freak you out the most is a four-wheeler deciding to be a hot-rod in the fast lane when the truck is kicking up a white snow cloud to blind the passing driver. Sometimes you can see someone trying to pass



you, other times you don't know they are right there beside you. Most of us probably have seen a car spin out of control as a result of trying to over take us on a highway. Time and time again we can't help but say, that was a dumb decision for them to make.

Slowing "ER" Down makes a lot of sense. Think about it, an accident will cost so much time for a driver, not to forget the financial hit the driver and company may take as a result. You may be slower to get to where you want to go, but it's better to be moving than to be in the back of a cruiser giving a statement.

Luggage

Pack smart and think ahead of what you may need. **What if your truck breaks down and you are without heat for a while?**

Packing for winter driving and ensuring your truck is equipped with all the essentials is smart thinking.

Bring your hats, mitts, long johns, sweaters and etc. It makes for extra luggage, but well worth the extra time to do so.

Some of us have driven and even slept in our hats and mitts and winter coats on because the

minus 40 degree weather just don't allow the interior of the truck to warm up sufficiently to be comfortable.

Visibility

Visibility at times in the winter can be very questionable. The bright sun hitting the white snow creates brightness on tired eyes. Bring those sun glasses to cut through the harshness of the rays.

Sloppy road conditions with dirty salt and ice can really impair your vision. It seems that the windshield washer fluid is always being applied to keep visibility at it's best.

Keep far enough behind vehicles to stop. Keeping far enough behind also prevents stones from flying up and hitting your windshield.

If you can't see far enough ahead, don't tail gate and assume the driver ahead is doing any better at seeing. Use evidence on the road to determine where lanes are.

Don't Be Fooled

Snow plows do a super job for the most part, but don't be fooled by where they throw the snow. After snow accumulates, snow plows tend to push snow to the sides of the road. At times, they push so much snow aside that they make false flat shoulder edges on the side of the road.

Though the ground looks flat and looks like a driver can pull over, it's really not flat and the road drops off under the snow but you can't see it. A driver will learn immediately if they try to pull over and suddenly realize their passenger side is sinking down a ditch embankment that the snow has hidden.

Be smart and drive safe.

CDN Cash Advances

For our new drivers and as per our driver's manual, Canadian Cash Advances taken have a service fee of \$25.00 per transaction.

We offer USD Cash Advances for no fees when a driver is filling up their truck at the same time. USD Cash Advances are okay because we realize driver's need access to U.S. Money while in the United States. Converting cash before leaving on a trip is inconvenient.

Some exceptions for CDN Cash Advances can be made but the driver must speak with Don Church **BEFORE** to taking the advance.

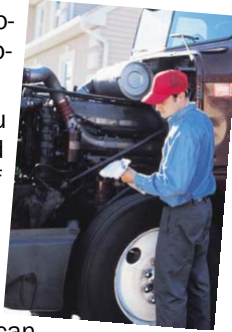


Shop Demo

It's to your advantage to know your truck. Though you are not required to be a mechanic to operate your truck, it's wise to know what's under the hood and where components.

We can make arrangements with someone in the shop to go over the vehicle with you to show you where components are located.

If ever you are stranded on the side of the road and the mechanic is asking you to locate an object, you can feel confident that you are giving factual information to help the mechanic on call locate the problem with your vehicle. Knowing a little more can mean reducing the amount of time it takes to get a roadside mechanic to fix you up.



Chaining Up!



Winter is coming and trucks that are traveling in certain areas of Canada and the United States... especially in the mountain regions are required by law to carry tire chains with them.

Some highways have signs indicating dates when chains are an absolute must. Some weigh stations or road side police searches check drivers to ensure they are carrying chains with them. If a driver doesn't have chains, they can be charged.

We have diagrams showing which tires need to have chains if you are required to attach them to your wheels.

Steve M (Dispatcher) is really knowledgeable in this area. Also, if you need a demonstration on how to do it, just arrange with Steve C (Shop) to show you how to do it.

Remember with driving with chains... improperly installed chains have the potential to do a lot of damage. Ensure you know how to do it because you just never know when you need to do it.

Windshield Washer

The shop orders in a barrel of concentrated windshield washer fluid. With empty bottles that are being returned constantly from drivers, the shop reuses the containers and puts them in the steel holding area outside the office.

Be sure to check prior to leaving if you have enough bottles. There's no reason to buy fluid in truck stops when the shop provides it for you.

What does happen is that drivers hold onto empty bottles for extended periods of time making container availability limited. If every driver returns back their empty bottles on a continuous basis, it ensures no one will leave here without enough supply.



Cameras and Video

No everyone likes their photograph taken and not every company wants photographs taken on their property. Some of the customers we service are very sensitive to cameras and video cameras being used on their property due to the type of business they operate.

We had one driver who was told to get back into his truck after taking pictures of his truck outside a customer's dock. They threatened to take his camera and escort him off the property.



With cell phone cameras, digital cameras, and video cameras, we never know when we are being filmed or who is taking our pictures.

Michael went on a personal trip and found a truck speeding 20 MPH over the limit in Michigan. Of course, he was in shock to see this truck pass him in the slow lane. So he whipped out his camera and video taped this driver speeding. In the video you can clearly see the company name and licence plate of the vehicle. The driver glanced out of his window and seen Michael. He then glanced again with a sudden body jerk to realize he was being video taped. He applied the brakes and slowed back down. However, this driver has been caught using Michael's own speedometer to show how fast this driver was going.

Though this video was never submitted to authorities or the company that was indicated on the truck, it wouldn't take much to search for this company over the internet and send them the video for their own information. They can't deny what happened because it was recorded.

There was a memo sent out a couple years ago about a Little Rock driver who was caught by our insurance company speeding 20 KPH over the legal limit on country highway here in Ontario. Insurance rates are based on driving records, it didn't look good for The Rock to have a driver being caught doing this.

It's bad enough that we are video taped as much as we are in banks, stores, highways, borders, and anywhere else you can imagine. With technology and the ease of the internet, it's never been so easy to have our picture or video taken. The internet makes it so easy to find us and be able to transfer video and pictures with a click of a mouse.

Reefer Drivers

Most drivers know that we now have a PIN PAD AUTHORIZATION PANEL attached to the reefer tank here at Little Rock and at P&H.

These are controlled through assigned driver pin codes. We are able to see who is filling up their reefers with times, dates, and etc. It also eliminates the need for keys to be shared.

The information received from the panels are real time. Meaning, we can see any fill up transaction at any time. Don Church controls the pin codes and access to these tanks. Have any questions, please ask Don or your dispatcher.



Colder Temps Are Back

With the cold weather returning, be sure not to leave your fuel tanks too empty. Tanks that are left empty or too low in fuel tend to freeze up if the tractor is sitting around.

Diesel when getting into the minus digits doesn't turn to ice, but it does turn into a gel like substance and making the tractor unusable until it is thawed out and/or serviced.

Besides, it's a lot nicer to get into a truck here at the yard knowing it's topped up with fuel and ready to roll on your next trip out of here.

Maintenance Help After Hours Is Extension 9

Drivers who require maintenance help after hours which includes Weekdays after 5pm to 8am and Weekends, need to dial extension 9 on the after hours menu option.

The maintenance staff on call which include John R and Steve C from the shop know exactly what to ask of you in order to get the help you need. The dispatchers after hours specialize in clerical admini-

stration and aren't knowledgeable enough to assist you.

It's nice to let the after hours dispatchers know there is a problem for scheduling reasons, but the driver will always be referred to the mechanic that is on call. The mechanic can "talk truck" to whomever is helping you and give you advice on what to look for.

By dialing EXT 9, the phone will bounce to whomever is assigned that responsibility for any given night or weekend. Thanks



Tarp Maintenance Bonus Returns For Winter

The chicken haulers know this bonus and it is tarp bonus that applies from October 1st to April 1st of every year.

The bonus is \$20 and is for the securing of the tarps around the chicken crates when empty and loaded.

The tarp's purpose when empty is to keep the snow and ice from going inside the crates. Cold chickens don't arrive alive, snow and ice inside crates help create this situation.

The tarps purpose when full is to keep the birds warm and comfortable during transit. A loaded chicken trailer in the cold has steam

rising up from the tarps from the birds own body temperature. The 10,000 birds on board keep the trailer warm with their own natural heat.

The trick is to ensure when the truck is in motion that not all body heat is vented out of the trailer. If the truck is traveling too fast on a cold day, the chickens are unable to maintain their body heat sufficiently. Driver must slow down and watch the temperature control on the trailer to ensure the birds are doing fine.

This bonus is given to allow drivers extra pay during adverse weather conditions for getting up on top of the trailer to roll back the tarp and slide tarps down the sides of the trailer.

Ice On Bridges

I'm sure most of us have seen cars and pick up trucks flying over an icy overpass. Sometimes you will see them slightly fish tail as they cross from land to the bridge surface. Sometimes they aren't so lucky and will fly over the over pass and end up in the median or ditch on the other side of the bridge.

We can't fix other people's driving habits and knowledge, but we can certainly adjust our own. Look for signs of ice on bridges by looking at existing evidence of fish tailing sliding marks, ice, reflections and snow



build up on the surface of the bridge.

Be careful on bridges that have slight turns, the bridge might have a nice smooth turn, but your vehicle may decide to stay straight if your driving technique doesn't match the conditions

of the surface.

Wind is a big factor on a bridge. Wind has a potential to treat your vehicle like a sailboat and push it out of alignment while driving down the road. That pushing could cause you to fish

tail or end up in a ditch on the other side if not treated with the proper respect.

Stay alert and really pay attention to signs and road surfaces. You will find road surfaces have so much to say if you can see what lessons other people didn't learn ahead of you.

Speaking from experience, I have seen 6 cars ahead of me in Michigan, the first car braked for no reason and all 5 cars behind it applied brakes and all 6 spun out of control off the road.

More Potential For Jackknife Situations

Jackknifing often develops while braking for a curve. Do your braking and/or gearing down well before the turn. Get down to a safe and easy turning speed. Take the turn with all wheels rolling.

When merging onto an

off ramp, be sure to slow down as much as possible while in a straight line and maintain speed control before taking the winding turn off the highway. Going too fast and attempting to continue to slow down as the road turns causes

the tractor to be pushed by the trailer. The trailer will push the tractor sideways causing a jackknifing situation to occur. Speed control can reduce this.



Bridge Underpasses—The Dangers

Low subways and underpasses are marked with clearance measurements. In winter, ice or packed snow can accumulate on the road, decreasing the clearance height. Watch for reduced clearances as a result of this condition.

Wind and ice can form under and over bridges quicker than a regular

road. The underpass has shadows and though some ice will melt on regular roads, the sunlight doesn't warm up the shadows enough to cause the same reaction.

It is best to take your foot off the acceleration and glide through the underpass using the truck's natural momen-

tum to push forward. Trying to continue to accelerate under the underpass may cause the tractor wheels to spin out of control causing a jackknife situation to occur.



Body Movements In Trucking—Michael's Blog

I was given a huge assignment to detail every job a trucker has when working. Doesn't sound like a huge task does it? The catch was that I had detail every possible job and relate it to the body motions required during the process of moving any body part. Take a look at an example:

Climbing Into Truck

- Driver will reach up over their head with their left hand to pull open the lever to open the door.
- With the left hand still over their head, they will grab onto the handle that is mounted to the left side of the door frame half way up the driver's side doorway.
- With the right hand, the right will stretch upward and grab onto the right side handle mounted to the right side frame of the door.
- The driver will step up with the left foot first to the first level running board.
- The driver will then reach up with the right hand, that is still over their head, and grab onto the steering wheel.
- The driver will then pull themselves upward using both hands and arms.
- The driver will use the right foot and step to the second level running board.
- Continuing to pull upward, the left foot will then step into the truck.
- Back is arched forward for balance control.
- Using both arms and left foot, the driver will continue to pull up and then twist body over the driver's seat.
- Using both hands and arms, the driver will grab onto the steering wheel and adjust themselves into the driver's seat by pulling full body weight forward out of the seat and then back down.
- The driver will reach way over to the left to grab onto the door handle and shut the door.

I believe in having mentors and in this assignment, I turned toward Theresa for guidance to best understand this task. Her and I were in her office talking about this and during the conversations you could see us moving our bodies in slow motion when talking about the job expectations. Clearly, I had a large project on my desk.

Her words of wisdom were, ***"Michael, you were a trucker and know exactly what you did during each process... just think about it and write exactly what you did!"***

Back to my desk... Okay lets examine each job. I broke it down into categories to make it easier. Just when I thought I was done, I would think of more which sometimes included a whole new sub-category area. Small things like opening up a customer's bay door. What it takes to do so. Bending, reaching, pushing, and so forth.

I have always known trucking is not an easy job. What I didn't realize is how physical the job actually is. I ended up with 14 pages of this size of writing detailing every job and requirement. I am thankful I can type fast because this project would have taken forever.

With every action requires energy. A "Calorie" is a measure of energy. The average person requires 1800 calories per day. Exceeding that calorie intake increases body weight, being under causes weight loss. Trucking requires people to be active and even some of the processes we endure causes us to break a sweat... like cranking a dolly lever on a trailer.

I find that trucking magazines who have a health section for us to read seems to be a joke. **Who in their right mind is going to be jumping a skipping rope outside their truck in a Flying J parking lot?**

Staying fit is a very tough thing to do, almost all of us entered the trucking field at a certain size but we have had to upsize our clothing to match our changing bodies. It's part of the job. **Who is not guilty for eating extra to stay awake with energy longer?**

I've tried diets and the healthy eating options. It is really hard because we crave energy and know that a can of coke will give an instant boost. Where water will give the same boost but the affects are not instantly noticed. We are in an instant society where we do something and expect immediate results. This is where most of us go wrong.

Border crossing adds an element because of the many foods that are not allowed to cross the border such as fruits, vegetables and meat products. Heading directly to a Wal-Mart after border crossing is not always convenient.

I have had food removed out of my truck at USA Customs. In fact, I had a case of Chef Boy R Dee. One by one, the officer removed each can from my shelf handed them out the window to another officer, I'm sure the product is made in the USA but labelled Canadian. I seen dollar signs cha chinging in my head as each can was handed out. Finally I couldn't resist and I spoke up. **"WHAT IS THIS... A JENNY CRAIG PROGRAM???"**

I find the more weight I gain, the more harder it is to move and do the job. I sweat a lot easier, out of breathe a lot more, and unable to quickly jump in and out of the truck as easily. Extra weight means more body strain even though it's hard to realize it.

Based on studies, if someone eats 500 extra calories over the 1800 / day, in a week, the person will gain 1 pound. Keeping in mind that 500 extra calories is so easy to do. Just a can of coke is 160. Just 3 cans of coke in a day plus your meals will put you over the top.

So what can a trucker really do to stay fit and healthy? I know myself well enough that if something is within arms reach of my drivers chair, it's considered eaten or poured down my throat quicker than I realized. Sometimes I have drank a can of coke and not even realized I have done it until I go to reach for it and realize the can is empty. Instead, what I learned to do is buy a case of 24 water bottles and leave them on the passenger seat. If I do crave a drink, I just reach over and take it. It's not as satisfying as a sugar rush, but I know I am doing myself a favour by making a better choice.

Trucking is a hard enough job, but I think we don't consider how much harder the job is when we don't take care of ourselves.