

Sharing the road safely with heavy vehicles

We all share the road, so it's important to be patient, courteous, and make safe choices to ensure everyone gets to their destination safely.

For many drivers, driving near heavy vehicles can feel intimidating. Understanding how they operate can help make the experience safer and less stressful.

Light vehicles include cars, utes and vans that weigh **up to 4.5 tonnes**.

Heavy vehicles are trucks, buses and other vehicles with a **gross vehicle mass over 4.5 tonnes**.

Key safety tips when driving near heavy vehicles

- **Don't cut in front.** Heavy vehicles are much heavier and take longer to slow down or stop.
- **Keep a safe following distance.** Tailgating blocks your view of the road ahead and reduces your reaction time.
- **Be patient.** Heavy vehicles take longer to accelerate, especially on hills or through towns, and may travel below the speed limit for safety.
- **Overtake with care:**
 - Make sure you have plenty of clear road ahead.
 - Signal, accelerate, and overtake promptly without exceeding the speed limit.
 - Don't pull back in too close – leave extra room.
 - Use overtaking lanes when available.
- **Watch for wind pressure.** Passing a heavy vehicle can create wind turbulence that may affect your steering.
- **Stay out of blind spots.** If you can't see the truck's mirrors, the driver cannot see you.
- **Give them room to move.** Heavy vehicles need extra space to turn or change lanes. Never overtake a truck that is turning.
- **Don't speed up when being overtaken.** Allow the heavy vehicle to pass safely.
- **Take extra care around oversize loads.** These vehicles may need more of the road to travel safely.
- **Dip your lights at night.** The driver's elevated position means high beams can cause glare well before you see the headlights.



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- **Increase distance in wet weather.** Heavy vehicles create more spray, which can reduce visibility – avoid overtaking if you cannot see clearly.
- **Pedestrians – give extra space.** Trucks are long and may cut corners when turning. Stay well clear when crossing near intersections.

About the SA Police Road Safety Centre

The SA Police Road Safety Centre leads the way in road safety education across South Australia. Our programs help reduce road trauma by building the awareness, knowledge, and skills of all road users – supporting safer journeys through lifelong learning.

Want to learn more?

Explore our full range of programs and resources:

 www.police.sa.gov.au/road-safety

Or simply **scan the QR code** in this fact sheet to go straight to our road safety page.

Book a FREE road safety session

We offer engaging, practical sessions for schools, community groups, and organisations.

 SAPOL.RoadSafetySection@police.sa.gov.au

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