



A commercial motor vehicle (CMV) making a U-turn can easily result in a serious or even fatal crash. Roads are not designed for CMVs to make U-turns. Whether a tractor trailer or straight truck, often the roads aren't wide enough to provide the room necessary to complete the turn.

Risks of CMV U-Turns

When there is not enough room for a CMV drivers are required to blindly back up to reset or in some instances the driver will continue driving onto (or through) the shoulder of the road. Many times the shoulder cannot support the weight of the truck (soft shoulder) and will give way causing the axles to get stuck or even worse, cause the truck to lean threatening a roll over.

Tractor trailers have the added risk of jackknife damage due to their articulation. Too sharp of a turn can cause damage to the back of the cab or cab extenders/fairings on the side of the trailer. They also run the risk of knocking over street signs and traffic lights due to the extreme angle required to make the turn.

Intersections

Even where it is legal, at a controlled intersection in the best case scenario the CMV will be blocking on-coming traffic at some point. This is especially dangerous when a U-turn is attempted without the benefit of a controlled intersection to stop traffic.

Even after a successful U-turn is completed a CMV cannot get up to speed fast enough to accommodate existing on-coming traffic. Performing a U-turn at night in an uncontrolled roadway dramatically increases the odds of causing a major collision.

Alternatives

Given the choice of a long out of the way ride just to turn around or saving time by making an illegal U-turn, many drivers will choose to make a U-turn. Don't do it! Continue on until you can find a large parking lot or similar space to make a safe change of direction. The odds of contributing to a major collision are not worth the risk!

For more information or questions please email us at: FleetRiskServices@ryder.com