

Five Highway Safety Myths That Cost You Time, Money, and Peace of Mind

Suzanne Carlson, a professional truck driver based in Oregon, debunks common misconceptions that put drivers at risk on the road.

Eugene, Oregon Aug 23, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Why These Myths Persist and Why They Matter

Road safety advice circulates constantly. Friends share tips, online forums offer shortcuts, and common wisdom gets passed down through generations of drivers. But not all of it holds up under real-world conditions.

Suzanne Carlson has spent nearly two decades behind the wheel of commercial vehicles, navigating everything from Pacific Northwest rain and fog to mountain snow and city congestion. Through thousands of miles across Oregon, Washington, and the western United States, she has seen how small misunderstandings about safety can lead to big problems.

"People sometimes underestimate how quickly road conditions can change," Carlson says. "Weather shifts, traffic builds unexpectedly, and visibility can disappear in a matter of minutes. Preparation and awareness make a difference every single day."

These five myths are some of the most widespread and some of the most dangerous.

Myth 1: Experienced Drivers Don't Need Pre-Trip Inspections

Many drivers believe that once they know their vehicle well, a thorough inspection becomes optional. Experience breeds familiarity, and familiarity can create complacency. People assume they will notice problems as they drive.

The truth is that small mechanical issues often go unnoticed until they become serious. Tire pressure changes with temperature. Lights burn out. Fluid levels drop. Brake performance degrades gradually.

"A lot of safety comes down to routine and discipline," Carlson explains. "Conducting inspections, monitoring weather conditions, planning routes, and staying focused behind the wheel all contribute to safer highways."

Practical tip: Before every trip, walk around your vehicle. Check tire pressure, lights, mirrors, and fluid levels. It takes five minutes and can prevent hours of trouble.

Myth 2: Four-Wheel Drive Means You're Safe in Any Weather

Drivers often assume that four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive provides immunity from winter hazards. Marketing reinforces this belief. Ads show vehicles climbing snowy hills and crossing icy terrain with ease.

Four-wheel drive helps you accelerate and climb. It does not help you stop or steer on ice. Physics applies equally to all vehicles when traction disappears. Overconfidence in equipment leads to speed choices that exceed road conditions.

Carlson has driven refrigerated goods and hazmat loads through mountain passes in winter. She knows that respect for conditions matters more than the capabilities of the truck.

Practical tip: Reduce your speed before you think you need to. Test your brakes gently on empty stretches to understand how much traction you actually have.

Myth 3: Fatigue Is Just Part of the Job

Long shifts and tight schedules encourage drivers to push through tiredness. Many people believe that willpower, caffeine, or loud music can substitute for rest. The myth persists because people have driven tired before without incident, reinforcing the idea that it is manageable.

Fatigue slows reaction time, impairs judgment, and reduces awareness. Microsleeps, brief lapses in attention lasting just seconds, occur without warning. A vehicle traveling at highway speed covers significant distance in that time.

Managing fatigue and maintaining healthy routines are part of the consistent habits that have shaped Carlson's long career. Staying mentally sharp during long shifts is not optional.

Practical tip: If you feel drowsy, pull over immediately. A 15-minute nap in a safe location is more effective than any amount of coffee. Plan your driving schedule to include regular breaks every two hours.

Myth 4: You Can Rely on Other Drivers to See You

Many people assume that if they can see another vehicle, that driver can see them. Blind spots, distractions, and poor mirror habits make this assumption dangerous. Large commercial trucks have especially large blind spots on all four sides.

Drivers merge without checking, change lanes abruptly, and follow too closely because they do not understand the limitations of visibility from a truck cab.

"Every day is different when you're on the road," Carlson says. "You have to stay prepared, stay focused, and respect the conditions you're driving in. Safety always comes first."

Practical tip: Never linger beside a large truck. If you cannot see the driver in their mirror, they cannot see you. Pass quickly and leave plenty of space when merging back in front.

Myth 5: GPS and Technology Replace the Need for Route Planning

Navigation apps provide turn-by-turn directions, real-time traffic updates, and alternate routes. Drivers increasingly rely on them exclusively. The assumption is that technology has made old-fashioned route planning obsolete.

GPS does not always account for vehicle size, weight restrictions, low bridges, or road closures. It cannot predict sudden weather changes or assess whether a shortcut is truly safe. Drivers who follow instructions blindly can end up on unsuitable roads or in dangerous situations.

Carlson plans her routes in advance, checking weather forecasts and road conditions before departure. Strong communication with dispatch teams and consistent route planning have been central to her

reputation for reliability.

Practical tip: Review your entire route before you leave. Identify rest stops, fuel stations, and alternate routes. Check weather forecasts for your destination and any mountain passes along the way.

If You Only Remember One Thing

Road safety is not about reacting to emergencies. It is about preventing them through preparation, awareness, and disciplined habits. Small actions taken consistently make the biggest difference.

"I've always believed that success comes from consistency," Carlson reflects. "You do the small things well every day, and over time those things add up."

Try One Tip Today and Share This List

Understanding these myths is the first step. Applying even one of these practical tips can improve your safety immediately. Share this list with family, friends, and coworkers who spend time on the road. Start with a single habit, a pre-trip walk-around, a scheduled break, or a route review, and build from there.

The road is safer when everyone takes responsibility for their own preparedness.

About Suzanne Carlson

[Suzanne Carlson](#) is a professional truck driver based in Oregon with nearly two decades of experience in the transportation industry. She has built her career on discipline, safety, and reliability, transporting freight throughout the Pacific Northwest and across the western United States. Holding a Commercial Driver's License with tanker, refrigerated, and hazmat endorsements, she is known for her strong safety record, calm decision-making under pressure, and commitment to mentoring newer drivers. Carlson grew up in Eugene, Oregon, and continues to call the state home.

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