

FIRST GEAR

NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

Presented by



FEBRUARY 2022



By Robert Greene

I will start this the way I start every day, by sending a message to my fellow truckers, which is “Okay, campers, let's get this party started.”

As a driver, you have to pay attention to many things while out on the road. From weather, traffic, and those driving on the road with you, truck maintenance, trip planning, and more, but really the first and most important thing you should always pay attention to is your health.

Take it from me, having a thorough check may uncover an issue that, left untreated, could end up a more significant problem.

Many of us often think that the DOT physical is all we really need to prove we are in good shape and road-ready. You may think that there is no need to regularly see your family physician or have frequent health and wellness checks. You feel fine, so why waste the money and time to get a more thorough exam when you got that card from your DOT physical that says you are good to go. No problem right, you are fine. You feel pretty good other than a few aches and pains, maybe a few symptoms that you brush off as being a part of the trucking lifestyle. But take it from me, having a thorough check may uncover an issue that, left untreated, could end up a more significant problem.

I am speaking from experience. I was hurt in a truck accident and went back out thinking everything would be fine as I had just gotten my new two-year card. I had some injuries from the wreck that would require some surgery but thought it could wait.

A little over a year after going back, I knew I had to have surgery. The surgery went well, or so I thought. After four weeks, the incision still had not healed. When I returned to the doctor's office, they ordered some bloodwork. Now, do not forget I could get a two-year med card, so I thought I was good. I received the news that the bloodwork had come back, showing that I had two types of chronic cancer.

At the end of the day, if you do not watch out for yourself, no one else will.

If I had gone to the doctor regularly and not just relied on my DOT physical as my wellness check, cancer may have been uncovered earlier, meaning the treatment plan may not have been as long as I am now experiencing. It has kept me from trucking far longer than if it would have been caught in the beginning stages.

Yes, not every little thing is cancer, but having regular check-ups and talking with your physician may discover problems far earlier. My advice is to always take care of yourself first, pay attention to what your body is trying to tell you. Spend that 30 minutes at least one or two times a year to get a thorough check-up that may catch things early so you can fix it before it shuts you down. At the end of the day, if you do not watch out for yourself, no one else will.

Stay safe out there and stay healthy. ●



Robert Greene is a RoadPro Pro Driver Council member and started trucking in 1986. He has been an owner-operator for nearly 20 years and has driven everything from oversized to flatbed drop deck, hazmat, reefer, and tankers. He enjoys helping other drivers and has written articles that share his advice on the trucking lifestyle.



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Strategies to Improve Eye Health

By Hope Zvara, Mother Trucker Yoga

When it comes to driver health, there are conversations about weight, diabetes, fitness, and even sleep, but what about eye health?

Eye health is often a neglected topic not by choice; vision health doesn't seem to get much attention until the person begins to have problems. As a truck driver, you cannot do your job if your vision is a concern, yet many drivers struggle with vision health and aren't sure what to do about it. You cannot drive without your sight, and February is low vision awareness month; it might be time to look into your vision health. If you are a truck driver who sits behind the wheel and drives for long hours, consider the following strategies to help improve your eye health.

Have a Balanced Diet



ensure adequate intake.

The following are essential nutrients to help keep your eyes and vision health strong: Omega 3-fatty acids, Lutein, Zinc, Vitamin C, and Vitamin E. To get these nutrients naturally, some foods you can add to your diet include eggs, pistachios, oranges, strawberries, broccoli, flaxseeds, walnuts, fatty fish, sardines, beef, and pork.

When you can't get adequate nutrition from food alone, consider adding a quality supplement. When shopping for supplements, look for where the ingredients are sourced, consider powders, liquids, or capsules instead of hard pills, and spread them out throughout the day. Our body constantly requires nutrition, not just in the morning or evening.

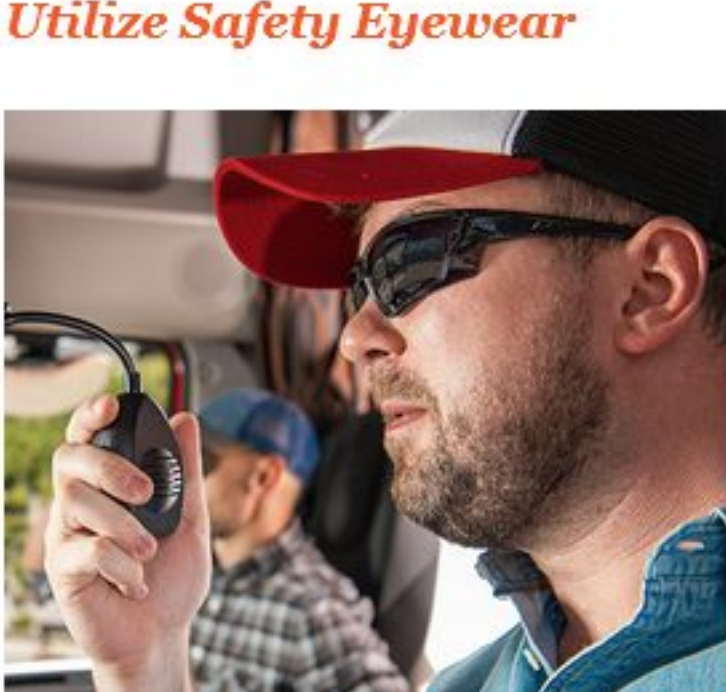
Avoid/Quit Smoking



the symptoms of that being accelerated.

So, if you're a smoker, consider what your vision means to you and what would happen if you one day wake up and find your vision health is at a loss. For many drivers, smoking is done out of habit, boredom, anxiety, and avoiding things like overeating. Still, the negative consequences of smoking far outweigh not trying to quit.

Utilize Safety Eyewear



Getting outside in the sun is essential to our health, especially since UV-B rays help us produce vitamin D3. But when it comes to our eyes, we want to make sure we protect our vision, but that doesn't include staying out of the sun.

But safety eyewear doesn't just mean safety from the sun's rays, also consider the long hours of exposure to vehicle headlights and other elements like dust; make sure you are wearing the necessary eyewear when needed throughout the day.

Get an Eye Check-up Frequently



Most people ignore the need for regular eye checkups and meeting with their doctors, and as a truck driver getting to the doctor can be the trickiest part. Consider scheduling your eye appointments well in advance to ensure you don't miss them. And if it's been a while, give your eye doctor a call, often there are cancellations, and you may be able to get a last-minute appointment while you are home next. Eye health is one aspect of our health that many take for granted and don't realize how important it is until it's starting to slip away. When I suffered a severe concussion a few years back, it

affected my already poor eye health, as I have been wearing glasses for years and have chronic dry eyes. Seeing an eye doctor more frequently and having a thorough examination has made a big difference in my eye health and has helped me recover to the best of my ability from the damage of my concussion to my vision. Please don't wait; when was the last time you saw your eye doctor, glasses or not? Every driver should be making their vision health a priority.

Make vision health a priority

Taking care of your eye health is not always the easiest if you are an over-the-road truck driver, but you can make your vision health a priority with the right strategies. I want to challenge you to make your vision health a priority for 2022 by adopting any one of our four eye health strategies.

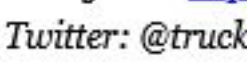
These strategies will help you maintain good eye health and also prevent you from getting any eye-related health issues. As we age, our vision changes, and it's critical that you are doing all you can to keep your vision seeing as far into the future as you can. ●

Hope is a yoga, movement, and lifestyle expert who is also a nationally recognized speaker and best-selling author and is the CEO of Mother Trucker Yoga®. She also hosts a radio show titled "A Daily Dose of Hope" that focuses on truck drivers' well-being, implementing programs that speak to both the body and mind. Providing drivers with a more fulfilling lifestyle by improving their health, mobility, and mental point of view. For more information, visit www.MotherTruckerYoga.com

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By Craig Daniels

On February 7, 2022, a new rule known as ELDT (Entry-Level Driver Training) will come into effect. Congress initiated this new rule as part of MAP21. This law was passed back in 2012. Yep, ten years ago, and this part of it is just now coming around. Now you know what they mean by “moving at the speed of government.”

How is this going to affect you?

If you are taking your test and training after that date, not much. If you are already a licensed CDL holder or CDP holder, even less.

Why are they pushing this?

For many years the industry has been trying to get a training standard for all new drivers coming into the field. The days of drivers coming from farms with a full-blown desire with family tradition to drive trucks over the road are just about gone. This push was to increase the safety of drivers and the general motoring public. What was showing up in crash data was that far too many crashes were the fault of drivers that didn't know what they were doing.

These drivers were run through what we used to call “puppy mills” of training schools. A person would go in and be rushed to pass a written test, then taught how to pass a practical test by the DOT or “designated representative” (don't even get me started on schools paying people to test their students). They would then be turned over to a “trainer” to learn the craft in as little as two weeks. The whole thing resulted in drivers being assigned first seat solo in a truck in as little as 2-5 weeks from deciding to be a driver.

Is this safe for everyone?

No. So, Congress decided to get involved and pass a law that puts standards on the schools, trainers, and students that are to become CDL drivers. Now a school must be a registered school with registered and certified instructors.

Ok, what does that mean?

Not much because it is all “self-certified.” However, it does mean that there is now a paper trail of what you were taught, by whom, when, and where. These are spelled out in the law that you have a few minimums in the way of time both in the classroom and the driver's seat. Kind of like what a pilot has to do. Minimums are completed to the instructor's discretion then tested by the state.

The trucking industry is becoming more diverse, and with that, a ‘one size fits all’ training program will not work and needs to be continually fine-tuned to address the needs of all that come into the trucking industry. America, being the land of opportunity that offers so much to so many from all over the world, has grown exponentially. That growth also brings demand. People need ‘stuff’ and that ‘stuff’ is carried by us and our trucks.

For more direct information on the Entry-Level Driver Training law, go to the link on the FMCSA's FAQ page. ●



Craig “oring” Daniels has been driving for Crete/Shaffer/Hunt for the last seven years. Daniels is an Army veteran who went into heavy equipment repair after serving, and that led to almost twenty years of building roads by running asphalt plants, rock quarries, and paving crews. He tried his hand at his own business as a subcontractor, but he started driving truck when the economy tanked in '09. He has been led to help and guide others along the way in what he calls divine intervention. He has trained and mentored other Crete/Shaffer/Hunt drivers, helping new family members

with policies and procedures unique to the company. He has been exposed to some special people who have taught and continue to teach him the force's ways and is proud to call a few good friends he values and takes their knowledge to heart.





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New for 2022

By Kim McDonnell, RoadPro Family of Brands

Coming soon to a travel plaza or truck stop near you will be a great offering of gear for your trucking lifestyle. Here are a few things you will see in stores.



A **45-piece stubby toolset** from RoadPro is sure to be a must-have for every driver. With a chrome vanadium steel construction, this toolset features a 1/4" and 3/8" dual drive ratchet with 72 gear teeth for speed and durability. IT comes in metric sizes and includes adapters and extensions. In addition, there is a high-torque ratcheting screwdriver with forward, reverse and lock positions. Multiple bits include slotted, Phillips, star, and hex.



RoadPro's **138 piece mechanic socket tool kit** gives you the right tool for the job. These heavy-duty tools are carbon steel and include multiple ratchet handles, extension bars, and adapters. It also has 14 hex key wrenches organized in a heavy-duty molded case. Check out the other tools sets and individual tools in-store now.



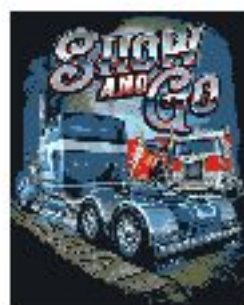
A variety of products to take good care of your truck and keep it in top shape are new to stores from RoadPro. Included in the line is an **all-purpose cleaner** that reduces cleaning time and easily removes dirt and grim, **foaming glass cleaner** to keep that windshield clear, **tire foam** to bring back that finish and eliminate scrubbing, and two types of **lubricating oil**.



Sure to come in handy for over-the-road travel is the **31 piece Roadside Emergency Kit**. The kit contains the most popular hand tools: a flat head and Phillips head screwdriver, a ten-piece nut driver set, and slip-joint pliers. There is also a tire gauge, insulated jumper cables, electrical tape, 12 electrical terminals and fuses, a road atlas, and a pair of durable work gloves.



Keep the grime out of your truck and avoid slipping with the **Sym-Mat Jr Door Mat**. This mat fits most conventional tractors and can mount to the step rail or catwalk.



Stay warm and display your trucking pride with soft, lightweight, whimsical **throws** from Diesel Life. These throws come in two sizes, 50" x 60" or a 60" x 70" Sherpa style, and have large print graphics. With four different designs to choose from that depict the trucking lifestyle, they will make a great addition to your cab. They are machine washable and easy to store when not in use, and can be found in most truck stops and travel centers.



Check out the new **memory foam neck pillow** from BlackCanyon Gear. It has a contoured design that provides the ultimate comfort and support, helping to relieve neck pain. The pillow has a snap closure to keep it in place and offers hygroscopic ventilation to keep you cool.

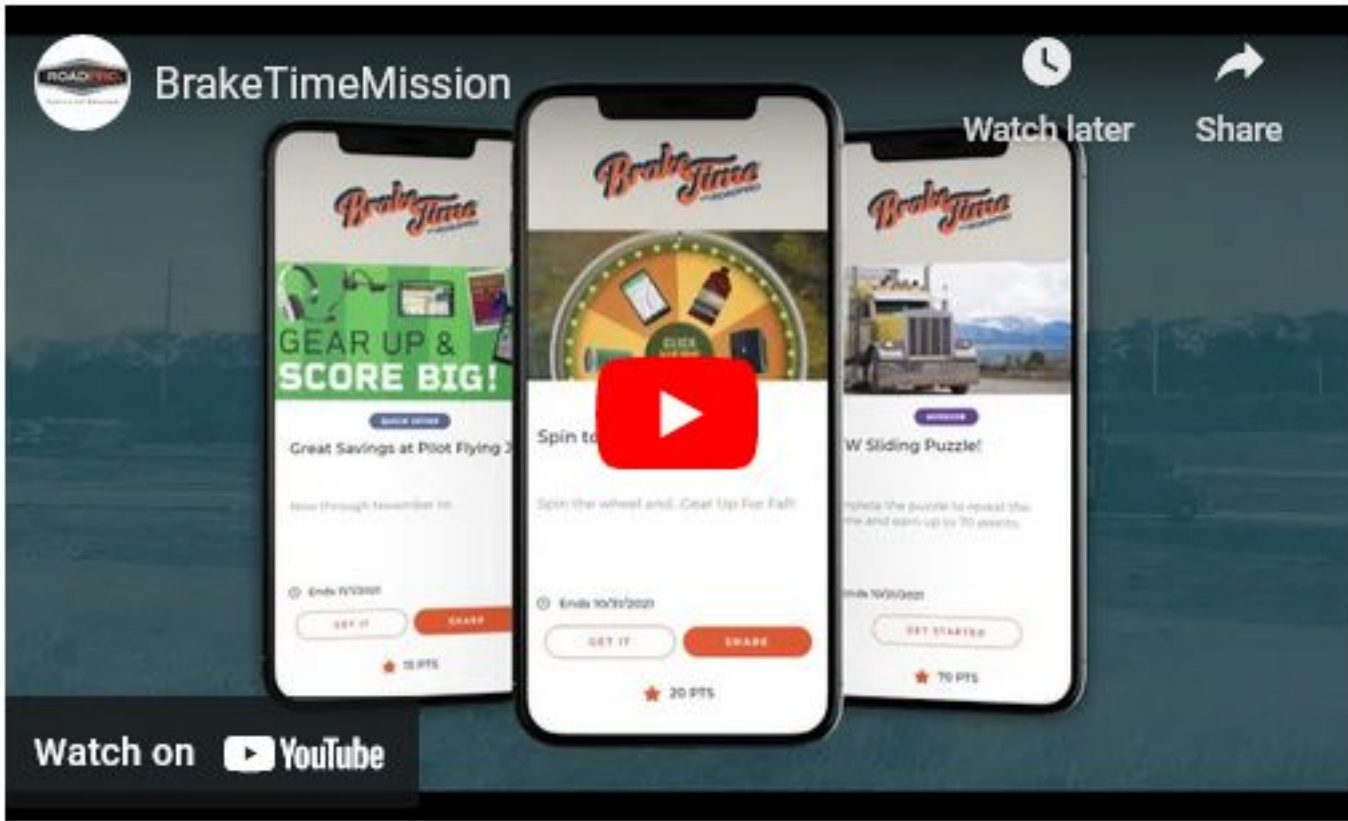


Sunglasses from Easter Island provide UV protection from those rays coming in your windshield and feature a bamboo construction. Bamboo sunglasses offer a unique look and are also eco-friendly. Wood frame glasses provide more durability than plastic frames and come in various shapes and colors. You will be looking good while rolling down the highway in these cool shades. ●





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