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Lorry Parking Guide

Freight Guidance

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Introduction

Being a professional driver, working and living away from home, you may be expected to park your vehicle away from your operating centre. You, your vehicle and your load are most vulnerable when parked away from your home depot or at the roadside. However, you are still responsible for the vehicle and its load. It is therefore vital that you look for and take advice on choosing a safe place to park.

This Guide provides simple advice on how to locate a safe place to park, what to look for in a parking location, and how to determine the risks to you and your vehicle. The following advice is important for your personal safety:

- stick to pre-arranged routes – always report diversions
- be alert to threats – watch for suspicious activity and never talk about your load to other people
- lock your cab when driving and when leaving it, always keep the vehicle keys on you
- protect your identity – try not to lose hi-vis or other company branded items
- try to use established and safe lorry parks and plan these into your route – if possible vary your routine
- never pick up hitch-hikers or unknown passengers
- always let someone else know where you have parked – for owner drivers this could either be your customer or family, company drivers should contact their traffic office

The guide also provides advice on how to assess lorry parks and what information could be useful to yourself, your customers or your transport manager in planning future journeys.

By following the simple steps outlined in this Guide, you can help ensure the safe parking of your vehicle.

Remember: professional drivers are champions of safety.

How will this guide help you

The road haulage industry is a potential target for crime. There are risks to drivers and operators of HGVs who ignore safe parking practice. By following the advice in this publication, you can help reduce the risk to you, your vehicle and your load.

By keeping to the simple rules in the bullet points above, you can help protect yourself, your vehicle and your load from crime

Truck crime – don't become a victim

Theft of a load

Theft from vehicles through slashed curtains is the most common form of a crime of opportunity. By parking in the wrong place at the wrong time you will increase the chance of putting your vehicle in harm's way.

Theft of fuel

With rising diesel costs and with a growing black market trade in stolen fuel, thefts of diesel have been increasing. HGVs are an easy target as they typically carry large quantities of fuel. Anti-siphon devices and locking fuel filler caps will be a good deterrent to most thefts. However, be aware that criminals also puncture tanks, collecting fuel in drip trays and jerry cans.

Remember: be aware of suspicious activity and report any concerns to the Police and your traffic office as soon as it is safe to do so

Theft of a complete vehicle

It is obviously easier to steal a vehicle if you have the keys. Drivers should be aware of the possibility of attack or hijack. The best form of defence is not to put yourself or your load at risk in the first place.

Do not leave the keys in the ignition when your vehicle is left unattended. Theft of trailers is a common crime and a potential target for criminals. An unaccompanied trailer can be unguarded for hours before an arriving tractor unit can take it away.

You may be the last driver to tow that trailer, don't just abandon it in the yard, make sure it is securely parked ready for the next driver. Security at your home base is equally as important as when operating away from home. Try to stay vigilant.

Vandalism

Vandalism is very hard to predict and even harder to prevent. The damage caused can range from damage to lights and bodywork to complete destruction through arson. There is no sure way to protect your vehicle from this kind of incident. Use your common sense and park your vehicle in as safe and secure location as possible, to reduce the risk.

Remember: parking in dark and secluded areas increases your chances of becoming a target for crime – always try to park in an approved lorry park.

Truck crime – don't become a victim therefore consider:

- keeping depot gates and access points closed and locked
- locking your cab and take the keys with you
- making sure your vehicle is safely parked where it can be seen on CCTV, from a security office, or in well-lit areas

Please remember:

- never talk about your load or pick up passengers
- watch for suspicious activity
- immediately report problems and concerns

Parking locations

As a professional driver, you will build up experience of where you can and cannot park your vehicle. If you are a new driver, ask for advice from other drivers, your colleagues, or transport manager. Where you park for your rest period will be determined by:

- your location at the end of your driving period for that day
- if it has the space and is legal to park an HGV
- where you can get some food
- where you can find drivers' facilities

Choosing a suitable parking location

This section provides basic information on how to determine if a lorry park or parking location is suitable for you and your vehicle. Choosing your parking location is vital to your personal safety and the safety of your vehicle. Depending on whether you can park inside an approved lorry park or elsewhere, some of the questions you may have to ask are:

- is it legal to park there
- does it 'look' safe, are other vehicles parked there, if not why not
- are there overhead/security lights, fencing, security gates or CCTV
- can you get a mobile phone signal
- are there any driver welfare facilities i.e. WC, shower, food
- for temperature controlled equipment - can you park where you won't interrupt other drivers who are sleeping
- for oversized loads - is there suitable access to the vehicle park and hard standing for higher weight vehicles
- for high value loads - exactly how good is the security on site
- does it compromise your insurance to park in certain locations

Remember to plan your parking location ahead, if possible take advice beforehand on the suitability of any site used. Please consider:

- planning your parking location ahead
- don't drive aimlessly around looking for parking – this wastes time, fuel and costs money
- try to park close to your chosen route for tomorrow's journey
- if you have chosen your own parking location make sure you report it back to your customer, family member or traffic office
- park with other vehicles if possible

Approved lorry parks

Most lorry parks (or Truckstops) operate 24 hours a day. They are the safest place to park when away from home. Good secure parks can have entry and exit gates, covered by CCTV and may have other security features. The larger lorry parks may have a vehicle wash, fuelling facilities, provide food, and wash facilities for drivers. On arrival, ask where the parking is for your vehicle type. For trailer changeovers and other activities, you might be required to carry out this elsewhere.

Approved lorry parks:

- look for good security measures; entry gates, CCTV, fencing and other signs of protection
- look for 24 hour opening if arriving late at night
- if possible plan to book and pay ahead
- try not to carry cash - instead pay by card and collect receipts to be reimbursed
- you may find food, washroom and fuelling at major locations
- some smaller lorry parks may have fewer facilities

Remember: always ask where to park on arrival - if you drive a refrigerated vehicle or carry chemicals you may be asked to park in certain areas.

Parking at the roadside

Always plan ahead to avoid parking by the roadside. If you have no choice but to park at the roadside, there is much you can do to ensure the safety of yourself and your vehicle. Your safety is paramount, and remote and insecure locations can present a threat and increase the risk of theft or damage to your vehicle. Being able to summon help in an emergency is important so make sure that your mobile phone is charged and that you have a clear signal.

Please remember to:

- make sure you let someone else know where you intend to park
- once parked, check for a mobile phone signal
- always park in a lay-by off the main carriageway
- within the lay-by, park close to the kerbside, to allow other vehicles to pass
- do not park facing towards the traffic flow
- if necessary leave sidelights on to show other vehicles that you are there

Parking at another company's premises

Reciprocal parking arrangements with other companies can save time and money. It is also safer than parking at the roadside. Often other transport companies can supply safe locations, driver welfare requirements and even mechanical services.

Customers may also be willing to allow you to park your vehicle on their premises. With their cargo onboard, your vehicle it might be in both your and their interest to provide a safe place for you to park.

Remember: always ask for permission when parking on private property – don't assume it is allowed because there is plenty of space in the yard.

Route choice and parking

Planning

If your route takes you away overnight, take advice on where to park. Companies may have policies on parking; you should always take advice from your traffic office on where you can park. If you are an owner-driver, ask your customer if there are opportunities for preferred parking at particular locations. Try to take advice from other experienced drivers, you may want to investigate your own parking locations based on your experience on the road.

Remember: advice from your fellow drivers or manager on where to park can reduce the risks to you and your vehicle as well as saving time and money.

What to ask your manager

For company drivers try to talk to your transport manager about your journey. Try to give them as much information as possible to help them plan your location at the end of your day away from home. If possible, ask them to arrange parking in advance for you. Use the following list of questions to help when seeking clarification from your manager:

- establish what are you carrying – if valuable or vulnerable, it is even more important to seek secure parking
- does the customer expect the vehicle to be parked securely when carrying their load
- does the company have parking accounts at locations on your route
- what do you need from a parking location; fuel, food, WC, shower
- is there another approved parking location en-route - in case you don't make your planned stop or run out of driving hours
- is there an alternative location at another haulage company's premises that you have been approved to use

How to pay for parking

Before setting off, establish if your company has parking accounts at appropriate lorry parks on your route. If your company doesn't have an account, ask how you are to pay for parking. Try to book a parking space ahead to guarantee that you have a place to park. Almost all lorry parks will allow parking to be charged by means of a company account; often there are discounts for regular users. When deciding how to pay for parking please consider:

- trying to arrange and pay for parking in advance
- finding out if the parking fee includes a meal voucher and access to WC and showers
- making sure you know how much your daily parking allowance is before you set off

Communicating with your traffic office or customer

Whether loaded or empty, parking at the roadside or in an approved lorry park, you should communicate to your traffic office or customer where you are parked. Even if it has been planned, it is always good practice to confirm where you are.

Please consider:

- if necessary ask your traffic office for advice if you are unsure about a particular parking location
- check with your customer to see if they can give advice on approved locations – remember that you carry their goods
- always check for mobile phone signal strength on arrival
- report your time of arrival and when you intend to depart
- some traffic offices are closed at night, make sure you have emergency contact information to hand
- if carrying valuables let your traffic office, know which of the customers' products are onboard

Finding appropriate parking

If you are an owner-driver, you may have to take charge of your own parking locations. As an employee of a company, you should always take guidance from your traffic office or transport manager on where you can or should park.

Whatever the situation, you should try to park in a safe and secure location. The advice in this section provides recommendations for resources to help you find secure and approved lorry parking locations.

Trade association resources

If you are a member of a trade association, you may already have access to free lorry parking information. When operating in a new or unknown area, don't be afraid to use the trade association resources to help you find appropriate parking locations.

Often their membership services' hotlines can help direct you to the closest lorry parking location. Trade associations also have online and internet information to help you locate lorry parks.

Internet searches

By using a common internet search engine, you can easily search for lorry parking information before starting your journey. Try to use simple search information, you should then be provided with the link to a number of websites. Most lorry parking websites are affiliated to other services and have free advice on where to park. Other users can also leave feedback so you can better judge the facilities before you actually decide to park at that site. For searches, please remember:

- if you use a wireless device to access the internet from the cab, you should find somewhere safe to stop first before using it
- try to use a common internet search engine
- type in a simple search such as 'Lorry Parking Glasgow'
- look for basic information; overnight costs, driver facilities and onsite security
- if you are unsure of the details of a particular park, try to phone ahead for information or to make a booking



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**

CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Transport Scotland

Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

0141 272 7100

info@transport.gov.scot

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