



In This Issue

- Tax Deductions for Drivers
- Are you prepared? Winter.....
- 6 Easy-to-Keep New Year Resolutions.....
- Birthdays

Tax Deductions for Drivers

In recognition of the fact that truck drivers incur unusual and often significant amounts of business expenses, the IRS offers multiple **tax deductions** for these drivers' use. Most of these deductions are available to drivers working for a company and self-employed drivers, but some of them only apply to self-employed drivers. Additionally, any employer-reimbursed expenses are not deductible.



Deduction Requirements

For a truck driver to claim a deduction, they must have what the **IRS** refers to as a "tax home". This means that the driver must have a permanent location in which they receive mail and use to pay their taxes.

Truck Driver Tax Deductions

The majority of **tax deductions** available to truck drivers are business deductions. However, because of the nature of truck driving, these deductions are often applicable to more aspects of a driver's employment than for other types of employees.

Telephone or Internet Access Fees: The IRS recognizes that mobile phones and wireless internet laptops are necessary for most truck drivers. However, it also believes that these tools will also be used for personal purposes while drivers are on the road. Therefore, it only allows drivers to deduct up to 50 percent of the cost of access fees. The entire cost of the actual phone or laptop required for work is deductible.

Subscriptions to Trucking-Related Publications: Because these publications often discuss new regulations and information relevant to the field, the IRS allows drivers to deduct their full cost. In general, a driver should be able to demonstrate that the main or only reason they subscribe to the publication is because of its pertinence to their employment.

Association Dues: Most truck drivers are required to be affiliated with unions or other collective trucking groups. The dues required for membership are entirely deductible. Voluntary memberships may also be deductible, but only if the employee can demonstrate that they assist in their career or are a regular membership in the industry.

Medical Examinations: Drivers required to undergo medical examinations for employment can deduct any out-of-pocket costs they incur. These deductions are taken as a business expense and not a medical expense, and, as such, do not need to meet the minimum threshold required to deduct a medical expense.

Licensing Fees: The costs associated with obtaining and maintaining a commercial driver's license (CDL) is entirely deductible. Similarly, the costs of any continuing education required to maintain a license with an employer, state or federal agency are deductible.

Travel Expenses: This category of deduction is broad. [Expenses](#) a driver incurs while on the road and working are deductible. This includes transportation to and from meals or lodging as well as any tips paid. It also includes the costs of postage for any mailings required to be sent from the driver's on-road location to their employer. Toll booth payments and truck parking costs are included in this category.

Per-Diem Meal Costs: The IRS allows drivers to deduct the specific amount of the costs of their meals while on the road and working or a uniform, per-diem cost. As of 2011, the per-diem cost was \$46.00 per day. Therefore, every day a driver was on the road and was required to eat away from home entitles the driver to a \$46.00 deduction.

Truck Maintenance Costs: Expenses associated with truck maintenance and cleaning are deductible regardless of whether the driver leases or owns the truck or works for an employer. This deduction includes: batteries, tires, sponges, cleaning supplies, CB repairs, truck parts and repairs.

Fuel: Drivers can deduct the cost of fuel they pay for out-of-pocket and which is not reimbursed as long as that cost exceeds \$100.00.

Personal Necessities: Personal items a driver requires to work on the road are deductible. These include: flashlights, binders, calculators, overalls or other specialized clothing, luggage, log book papers, coolers for food, gloves and sunglasses.

Deductions for Owner-Operators

Truck owner and operators have additional deductions available to them. These truck drivers can deduct the cost of insurance premium payments, leasing fees for the truck and interest payments made on the loan used for the truck's purchase.

Owner-operators can also deduct the depreciation amount the truck sustained over the year. This deduction is available each year that the truck is owned, used and in which it depreciates in value.

Claiming Your Truck Driving Deductions

As a truck driver, you have several deductions available for your taxes that were specifically designed for your employment. Seek legal or financial advice if you are unsure what deductions apply to your situation.

Are you Prepared? Winter Weather Driving Tips



It's that time of year. Winter weather conditions can sneak up on even the best driver, and all it takes is one moment of complacency to make a costly mistake. Don't let the changing seasons catch you off guard, as they do with much of the general motoring public.

Winter demands heightened awareness and driving skills; and the ice, snow, wind and cold test each driver's professionalism. This winter, keep in mind some of these defensive driving tips:

Visibility—Watch for brake lights on the vehicles ahead of you.

- Make sure your lights are on and working.
- Clean the ice and snow off mirrors, windows, lights and reflective tap.
- Use your air conditioner to help keep windows defrosted. Yes, I said air conditioning...Conditioned air is dry air.
- Watch the cloud of powdered snow surrounding your unit. There may be a car hidden in it.
- Look out for other vehicles whose only means of visibility is a 3"x3" area scraped off the windshield.
- See and be seen. Be aware of your surroundings. Look ahead, to the sides and rear.

Roadway—Watch for glazed conditions and slow down for the following:

- Be extra cautious on entrance and exit ramps. A sharp turn on a slippery road means double trouble.
- Be aware of bridges. Their surfaces freeze first and can be more slippery than the roadway itself.
- Intersection can be very icy, so start braking early for stop signs and red lights.
- Allow for the wind. Be ready for it in a large open areas or when you come out from behind a hill, or an overpass...especially with an empty trailer.
- Don't "fall" for roads that are rain covered. Keep your speed down to maintain traction and stay off cruise control. If your wipers are on, the cruise should be off. Increase your following distance to be able to react to other vehicles getting into trouble ahead of you.

Traffic—the general driving public is not ready for winter storms. Be especially careful when you are in an area that is being hit with its first storm of the season.

- Keep in mind the importance of a good following distance (7-14 seconds) or more and your ability to recognize what the other driver might do.

Traction—Starting, stopping and steering all require traction.

- Don't drive in the ruts of other vehicles. Their spinning wheels have probably packed the snow into ice.
- Accelerate/decelerate carefully and gradually. Remember that the tractor must pull the trailer. If the pavement is slick, the conditions are ripe for a jackknife.
- Slow down. Speed decreases traction. Slowing will increase your traction.
- Turn the engine brake off when on wet, icy or snow covered roads, when approaching bridges, on-ramps or exit ramps.

Defensive driving involves the ability of the professional driver to operate the vehicle without being involved in a preventable accident. Sometimes this means letting the driver who is in the wrong have the right-of-way.

6 Easy-to-Keep New Years Resolutions for Drivers

One of the reasons many truck drivers fail at their New Years Resolutions is because they tend to set unattainable goals or get discouraged when they don't see immediate results. While they have good intentions at first, over time their motivation begins to wear off...When it comes to health, we'd rather you make some small changes that can have big results over time as opposed to attempting to tackle mountains right out of the gate. The idea here is that these goals are more manageable and can create some positive momentum that will carry over into other things.



Today, we've got 6 goals for truck drivers to set that don't require reaching for the stars. They're small goals (OK, so the quit smoking thing may be pretty lofty for some of you) that will help improve the overall health and hopefully create a snowball effect. Let's take a look.

1. **Drink more water (instead of other things).** This is a great beginner New Year's resolution for truck drivers. It's no secret that pop and sugary drinks do nothing for our health on the road, yet they're always so readily available at truck stops. Ever stop to calculate how many calories you're taking in through beverages alone? Sometimes we "forget" that there are calories in these, and they can often add up to as many as 400-500 extra calories a day. Holy smokes! [Switch out the energy drinks, soda, and sugary beverages for good old H2O](#) for an easy health improvement.
2. **Do some type of physical activity for 20-30 min daily.** This one is relatively easy to incorporate into your daily routine as well. You don't have to do a full body strength workout to get some exercise on the road ([though it never hurts!](#)). A brisk walk or run around the truck stop will get your heart rate up and give you some cardio for the day. Nowhere to walk? 34 laps around your truck is a mile. Figure out a way to do SOMETHING.
3. **Spend more time with loved ones.** Spending time doesn't always mean being there in person. Even if you're apart, you can still build memories and bond with family and friends back home. Consider setting up a "Skype date" with your significant other, kids, or friends on a regular basis. Not only will it give you something to look forward to, but it will provide some consistency in an otherwise inconsistent work schedule. Whatever you choose, pick "your thing" and stick to it.
4. **Save more money.** There are a couple things you can do right away to save a little extra dough. The biggest way to save cash? Buy your own groceries to store in a mini fridge or cooler rather than stopping at a truck stop or fast food joint for meals. Not only is [fast food high in basically everything](#) (fat, calories, carbs, etc) but it's also wildly expensive. Think about how much you could get at the grocery store compared to a week's worth of fast food meals.
5. **Just relax from time to time.** We know situations can quickly become tiresome when it comes to getting loads or requesting home time. But try to see things from the other side, too — many times your fleet manager is feeling overwhelmed with balancing multiple drivers at once. A little patience can go a long way and sometimes it is better to just relax.

Whether it's a car cutting in front of the truck or rushing to get somewhere on time, after the fact you need to take a little break to keep it from creeping into the rest of your day. Even if it's just 10-15 seconds. Take a deep breath and give some of these [stretches for truck drivers](#) a try.

6. Quit smoking. Okay, this one is tough. We added it to the list because it doesn't take any additional time, just additional will power. It's an issue among truck drivers and it's one that MUST be addressed. Maybe cold turkey is the way to go here or maybe it's just a matter of cutting back 1-2 smokes at a time. The bottom line is that if this is a bad habit it's better to do something about it NOW.



Jeremy Hurlbut 1/6

Beverly McQueen 1/12

Magic Transportation
5757 Clay Ave SW
Wyoming, MI 49548

(616) 532-1333

(616) 532-2427 fx

Visit us on the web at
www.magicdelivers.com

