

Safety Bulletin

Essential Apps for Truck Drivers

From finding the best route to monitoring fuel prices, there is a range of technology applications that can aid professional drivers. Here are some popular apps that are making life easier for drivers out on the road.

GPS Apps

The right GPS apps can help carriers calculate routes based on vehicle dimensions and load contents, which can help drivers avoid fines, wasted time and out-of-route miles, but it is important for drivers to understand that not all apps are created equal. With GPS technology, it is important for drivers and carriers to find applications that are designed specifically for the heavy-duty trucking sector.



Recently, one driver in Pennsylvania was jailed and faced a \$17,386 fine for driving a 40-ton truck on a road with a 10-ton limit. Police said the driver might have avoided the situation if he had purchased a GPS device that would have alerted him to the weight limit.

“By using a navigation system that does not provide important route restrictions, such as low bridge overpasses, the shortcut you thought would save you time and fuel may end up costing you more than you bargained for,” said the Department of Transportation’s Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). “A typical system that a consumer might buy at an electronics or auto parts store may not have software programming to show low bridges, hazmat routes and other information relevant to commercial motor vehicle operators.”

FMCSA has said it will work to prevent accidents caused by the improper use of consumer-grade navigation devices in trucks and buses and has created visor cards to help drivers find the best device.

There are several GPS apps on the market geared for truck drivers, including SmartTruckRoute and CoPilot.

Electronic Logging Apps

Smartphones and the apps that run on them can automate what were once paper-based tasks and give drivers more legal driving time each day. A growing number of drivers are turning to electronic logging apps, such as BigRoad, electronic driver logs from XRS and TomTom Telematics.

Weigh Station Bypass App

The Drivewyze PreClear Bypass app can save drivers time by minimizing stops at weigh stations. With the subscription-based app, drivers receive alerts as they approach scales and can bypass the scales 50 percent to 98 percent of the time in 35 states, depending on the carrier’s safety score. Drivewyze also offers a free app that provides a heads-up as drivers near a weigh station.

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Overnight Parking Apps

Finding truck parking can be a challenge for drivers in some areas. Several apps are available to help them find a place to rest. Road Breakers consolidates information on the locations of truck stops, rest areas and truck-friendly businesses to help drivers find a place to park. The Travel Centers of America/Petro Stopping Centers app, TruckSmart, features a plan-to-park function that shares space availability with drivers. Thermo King recently released its app that guides drivers to overnight parking in 2,250 stalls at Thermo King dealers for a fee. Parking is not contingent on being a Thermo King user.

Fuel Price Apps

Gas Buddy is a free app that helps users find cheaper fuel prices in their area. The FleetAdvance Mobile app from fuel-card provider Comdata lets its customers search by their current location to find the lowest prices along their routes.

Scale Apps

With the Weigh My Truck app from CAT Scale Co., drivers can visit a scale, weigh, and receive their information via the app without ever having to open their door or roll down their window. They can also use the Scale Locator app to find the nearest scale.

