

AN ELEPHANT ON THE SIDEWALK

Steering A Large Vehicle

Anyone with a driver's license may think he knows what steering is all about. You just turn the wheel and the car goes left or right. But for commercial drivers, proper turning isn't that simple.

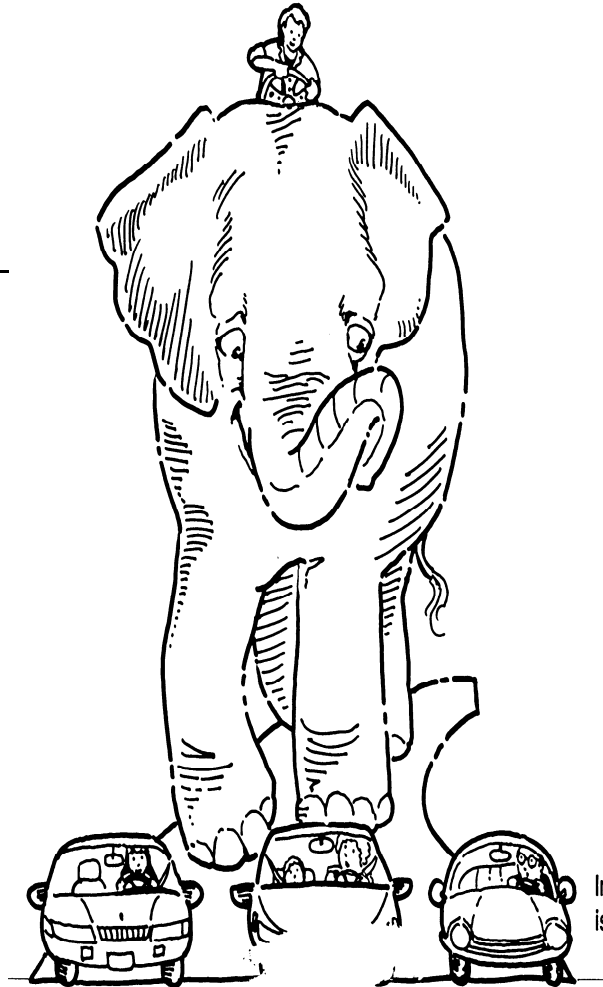
Know how to steer your vehicle properly and you can save yourself a lot of grief. You'll also save wear and tear on other parts of your vehicle, including the brakes.

Know Your Limitations

Next time you're out of the vehicle, take a good look at it. Common sense tells you it can't negotiate turns as quickly as your car. Its center of gravity is too high, and load distribution can make things worse.

Centrifugal force tends to exert an outward pull on anything that is spinning in a circle. When applied to your truck, it means you're pulled sideways each time you go around a curve. This is why it's essential to watch your speed on curves. Determine the speed at which you can negotiate any curve safely, then go into it a little more slowly than that.

Accelerate slightly as you turn, and don't hit the



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brakes. If you hit the curve too fast, you'll feel yourself sliding outward. If centrifugal force takes over, you may skid or, worse yet, roll over. Even if you avoid this catastrophe, your cargo can be tossed about and damaged.

Turn It Carefully

The same kind of common sense have to apply when you're making turns in city traffic. In relation to other traffic, your truck is a bit like an elephant on the sidewalk. Anything you do is likely to

have a big impact on somebody else.

That means you have to know where your vehicle is, as well as where it's going to be once you follow through with a turn. You need to exercise skill, control and excellent judgment because your rig takes up a lot of space as it goes around the corner.

If it's a choice between going into a turn too fast or too slow, always err in the direction of turning too slowly.