



# Toolbox Talk

## Fatigue & —————▶

## Break Compliance

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**Applies to:** All HGV Drivers | **Issued by:** The CO. Network | **Estimated Read Time:** 3–5 minutes

### Why This Matters

Fatigue is one of the leading causes of serious HGV collisions.

Many incidents occur when drivers are technically legal but mentally exhausted.

Most drivers do not fall asleep suddenly.

Fatigue usually shows up first as:

- Slower reactions
- Poor judgement
- Missing hazards
- Short attention span

Managing fatigue protects **you, the public, and the operator licence.**

### UK Safety Statistics

According to the Department for Transport road safety statistics:

- Around **20% of motorway accidents are fatigue-related.**
- Driver tiredness is a contributing factor in **approximately 4% of fatal crashes.**
- This equates to **around 40–50 deaths per year** on UK roads linked to fatigue.

Heavy Goods Vehicles are involved in a smaller proportion of accidents overall but:

- Due to vehicle size and weight, collisions involving HGVs are **far more likely to result in serious injury or fatality.**

Fatigue is also frequently identified during roadside enforcement by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency where drivers exceed legal driving limits or delay required breaks.

### The Core Rules

HGV drivers must not exceed: **4.5 hours driving without a break**

After 4.5 hours, you must take: **45 minutes break**

This can be taken as:

- ✓ 45 minutes in one break
- OR
- ✓ 15 minutes followed by 30 minutes

✗ **30 minutes followed by 15 minutes is NOT valid**

## Signs of Fatigue

If you notice any of the following, you should stop safely and rest.

- Struggling to concentrate
- Missing road signs
- Heavy eyes or yawning
- Drifting in your lane
- Feeling irritable or impatient

These are **early warning signs**.

## Best Practice

- ✓ Plan your break before reaching **4 hours driving**
- ✓ Do not rely on “**I’ll just finish this delivery**”
- ✓ Check the **tachograph display regularly**
- ✓ Always assume parking may be limited
- ✓ Take the break **early rather than late**

## Driver CheckIn

Ask yourself during your shift:

- Have I driven more than **4 hours without planning a break?**
- Do I know **exactly how much driving time remains?**
- Am I alert and focused?
- Would I feel comfortable if DVSA checked my tachograph right now?

If any answer is **No**, take action immediately!

## Remember!!

You are **personally responsible** for your driving time.

No delivery schedule overrides road safety law.

### **Managing fatigue protects:**

- Your licence
- Your safety
- Other road users

## Acknowledgement

Please confirm you have read and understood this guidance.

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