

Taking a break while on the road

Basic overview of hours-of-service regulations:

- You may drive a maximum of 11 hours after 10 consecutive hours off duty.
- You may not drive beyond the 14th consecutive hour after coming on duty, following 10 consecutive hours off duty. Off-duty does not extend the 14-hour period.
- **30-Minute Driving Break:** Drivers must take a 30-minute break when they've driven for a period of 8 cumulative hours without at least a 30-minute interruption. The break may be satisfied by any non-driving period of 30 minutes.
- Drivers are allowed to extend the 11-hour maximum driving limit and 14-hour driving window by up to 2 hours when encountering adverse driving conditions.



Now that you know the why, let's explore some suggested ways to safely comply.

1. Preplan your route so you'll be stopping at rest areas or truck stops that will have plenty of room. With increased truck traffic, this is very important since spaces are becoming less available.
2. Never underestimate the usefulness of an interstate rest area. Not only do rest areas offer easy exit off the highway, they offer easy entrance back onto the highway. In addition, they typically provide pull-through spaces. These spaces are preferred, but safely backing into spaces is also acceptable. Rest areas are the safer option, statistically, as more accidents happen in truck stops than at rest areas. Always remember, entrances and exits to rest areas and interstate highways should never be considered approved stopping and resting areas.

These states allow overnight stays in rest areas.

This list is constantly changing so continue to check state regulation along your route when preplanning.

Arizona • Arkansas • Connecticut • Indiana • Kansas • Nevada • New Mexico
New York • Ohio • Oklahoma • Oregon • Texas • Virginia • Wyoming

Some states limit the number of hours you may stay in the rest area.

Check the state regulations along your route when you're preplanning your trip.

3. When possible, avoid parking at the end of the row of parking spaces in rest areas and truck stops. These locations are exposed to a high volume of crossing traffic and are typically accessed by tired drivers. Tired drivers frequently have accidents.
4. In rest areas and truck stops, avoid spaces that will force you to back out when you leave. Choose a space you can either pull through (best choice) or back into a spot on arrival so you can pull out when you leave (second-best option). Avoid parking across from a space a truck will back out of.

If a truck next to you parks too close to your vehicle, write down any information that will help you identify that truck, and if any damage occurred during your stay.
5. Always park your vehicle as straight as possible. It reduces the exposed area of the truck that could be struck by other drivers.
6. A general rule is to park away from vehicle traffic in the truck stop or rest area. Choose the safest and easiest place available. If you must back out of a space, remember **G.O.A.L.** (**Get Out And Look**). Getting out and looking is the best way to avoid backing accidents.
7. Before shutting down for rest /sleep, always get out and inspect your vehicle to make sure your freight is locked and secured. If possible, try to park under or near overhead lighting to provide additional security while you sleep.

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The hours-of-service rules were put into place to make sure all DOT drivers can sleep safely for an extended period. Here's a suggested list of items that can help you get to sleep and refresh yourself during your down time.

1. Parking under overhead lights is for your safety and the security of the freight you're hauling. These lights, however, may keep you up at night. Pack a sunshade, mainly used for sleeping during the day, but also helpful in keeping nighttime overhead lights and passing headlights out of the sleeping cab.
2. Rest areas and truck stops are busy with noisy vehicle traffic. A white noise machine can help reduce the outside noise. If no noise is your goal, you can purchase ear plugs or noise canceling headphones.
3. Consider a mattress topper to enhance the quality of your sleeping surface. A comfortable bed is essential for quality sleep.
4. Reducing your truck's idling will allow you to get quality sleep. These items will help you do this: 1) a humidifier/dehumidifier which will help you regulate the humidity in the cab and sleeping berth which, in turn, allows you to stop idling the truck, and 2) APU (auxiliary power unit). These can be expensive but are considered a great investment for your comfort. These units power auxiliary/driver convenience equipment in the cab. In addition, APU can provide power to semi refrigerator units and engine block heaters to prevent fuel gel in the winter months. These units reduce idling which results in substantial cost savings.

Personal safety for female drivers

Female drivers are at higher risk of physical assault in rest areas and truck stops.

1. If possible, stop at hotels or motels.
2. Team driving is a good alternative to discourage potential attackers.
3. If you're a solo driver, always insinuate that you're a part of a driving team. Make your sleeping berth look like it's occupied by another driver by keeping the berth curtain closed.
4. When interacting with other drivers, always carry yourself confidently and be in control of your surroundings. Make eye contact and speak with an authoritative tone.
5. Always park your vehicle close to other vehicles, preferably under an overhead light.
6. Always carry a noise alarm, pepper spray, and, if the state permits it, a small taser for your self-protection.