



Truckers, delivery drivers, farmers, firefighters, and workers that drive or ride in large commercial trucks and vans, farm equipment, and fire apparatus get injured when they enter and exit vehicles unsafely. Due to inattention, speed, and rushing in an emergency, workers slip and fall when they do not use vehicle steps and handhold devices.

Falls cause strains and sprains, broken bones, and fatalities. If you work around large vehicles, wear shoes with sturdy, no-slip soles and a heel.

Things to remember when entering a vehicle:

Clean and maintain the vehicle steps; wet or oily “diamond plate” can be very slippery. Only climb on dedicated stepping areas; fuel tanks and fenders can also be slippery. In hot and cold weather, wear gloves to help you grip hand railings.

Face the vehicle when you enter it. Take hold of the grab bar and use it to help you climb up. If a grab bar is not available, grip the seat or other fixed object in the vehicle. Do not grab the steering wheel unless it is locked; it can turn suddenly and throw you off balance. Do not grab the door or handle because it can swing out and cause you to fall. If grab bars are missing or improperly placed, add one or move it to a safer location.

Plan your steps into the vehicle so that you are standing on the same leg as the side that you are entering.

How to enter/exit

To enter the left/driver’s side, stand on your left leg and lift your right leg up. You may need to change hand and feet positions while entering and exiting. Always keep three points of contact with the vehicle (one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot). To avoid falling out backwards, maintain the three-point rule until you are securely seated in the vehicle or firmly on the ground.

To **exit** the vehicle, examine the ground before you step out. Look for ice, water, cracks, and uneven surfaces. Face the vehicle and step down backward while holding onto the grab bar or other stable surface. Use all steps until you reach the ground. Do not skip any steps then jump and hurt yourself. Never jump down or “fall” down forward out of a vehicle; you can catch your clothing on the door handle, seat adjustments, seat belt, etc. causing a serious, uncontrolled fall.

Avoid jumping from the vehicle

Jumping increases the force and strain on your bones and joints (mostly ankle, knee, and back). For example, in a cab-over-engine tractor, jumping from the top step can apply 7.1 times your body weight to your back and leg joints (1420 pounds of force for a 200-pound person). Jumping from a delivery step-van with a package in hand causes an impact of 3.5 times the body weight plus package weight. Add these impacts to frequent entries and exits and you are at risk of injury.

Just like falling off the vehicle, those who jump could suffer sprains, broken bones, or worse. Climbing down safely can save you pain and time overall.