

J. J. Keller®

SAFE & SMART® TRAINING SERVICES

SAFETY ON WHEELS: MASTERING YARD TRUCK OPERATIONS

The qualification requirements for a yard truck driver can vary depending on the area the moves are made in. Part 390.5 defines a highway as any road or street, whether public or private, open to public travel. If a yard or lot has signs that prohibit entry or restrictive gates preventing public access, the yard is considered off-highway and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) do not apply.

Most yard operations involve vehicle combinations of more than 26,000 pounds and trailers rated at 10,001 pounds or more. If the yard driver needs to travel on a “highway,” which is any area open to the public, even if on private property, the driver must:

- ✓ Be qualified under Part 391,
- ✓ Have a commercial driver’s license (CDL) per Part 383, and
- ✓ Participate in a drug and alcohol testing program under Part 40 and 382.

POTENTIAL DAMAGE

Improper use of yard trucks can result in various types of damages including to vehicles, property, and people.

Collisions with other vehicles are common in yards and can result in significant damage to the yard truck and other vehicles. This can result in vehicles being taken out of service to be repaired. Loads may need to be unloaded and reloaded on another trailer, adding to the operating cost. In many cases each facility only has one yard truck, so production may be slowed by using a traditional tractor to move trailers. In some situations, renting another yard truck may become necessary to continue operations. This cost would further reduce profit margins.



SAFETY ON WHEELS: MASTERING YARD TRUCK OPERATIONS *continued*



Property damage could result in damage to loading docks and security equipment such as fences and fire hydrants. This damage often slows or stops operation and requires additional security personnel to secure the damaged area and keep others safe.

COST OF DAMAGE

The cost of damage involving yard trucks can vary significantly based on the severity of the incident. Property damage from yard trucks can result in claims in the tens of thousands of dollars, or more.

Accidents involving personal injury almost always result in litigation. Settlements can cost millions of dollars. The emotional cost to a driver of a vehicle that causes permanent injury or death to another person is immeasurable. In some cases, the driver and/or company could face criminal charges.



**Accidents
involving
personal
injury almost
always result
in litigation.**

FAMILIARITY WITH THE VEHICLE

Familiarity with the yard truck enhances a driver's ability to operate it safely and efficiently, minimizing the risk of accidents and ensuring a safer working environment.

Drivers who are comfortable with the controls and handling of the yard truck can operate it more efficiently. Smooth operation reduces the risk of distraction and other unsafe behaviors.

Knowing the visibility limitations of the truck requires the driver to take extra precautions. Proper adjustment of mirrors helps create the best visibility. Spotters may even be required to complete some maneuvers safely.



J. J. Keller®
SAFE & SMART® TRAINING SERVICES

SAFETY ON WHEELS: MASTERING YARD TRUCK OPERATIONS *continued*



UNIQUE MANEUVERS

Yard trucks are often used to stage trailers in locations other power units cannot access. Knowing the layout of the yard will alert the driver of the more difficult areas of the yard. Proper planning will help the driver navigate tight spaces and avoid collisions.

Proper operation of yard trucks lowers the frequency and severity of accidents. Loss of revenue, equipment repairs, and liability claims can have a significant effect on your bottom line.



Take the Next Step Toward Safer, Smarter Yard Operations



J. J. Keller® Safe & Smart® Yard Driver Training will train your yard jockeys to move trailers safely and efficiently in the yard and on the road, including coupling and uncoupling, vehicle inspections, backing and docking, and more.

Enroll your drivers today and move your yard operations forward with confidence.

JJKellerSafeandSmart.com/YardJockey
833.982.1236

435088-075 Copyright 2025 J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc.

 **J. J. Keller**
& Associates, Inc.®
Since 1953