

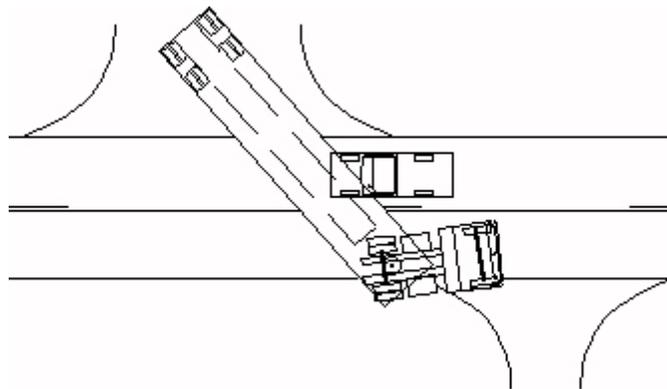
**TRAILER UNDERRIDE**  
**DON'T BE A VICTIM**  
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Some of the most horrendous collisions occur at night when a tractor trailer backs across a roadway or turns left from a driveway. The elevated structure of a trailer can peel back the roof and crush the passenger compartment of an automobile even at slow speeds. Most of these collisions involve three factors:

1. A poorly illuminated trailer.
2. A truck tractor position on the oncoming shoulder or the oncoming lane of travel with its headlights pointed toward approaching traffic.
3. An approaching driver who observes the truck but does not realize there is a trailer stretched across the roadway.



The typical trailer is illuminated with three side marker lights, an amber light on the side near the front, an amber light in the middle and a red marker light on the side at the rear. In addition, a similar color reflector must be located adjacent to the side marker light. On most trailers both the marker lights and the reflectors are small. When located behind the glare of oncoming headlights, the side lights can be somewhat difficult to see under the best of circumstances. However, there are a variety of conditions which can further decrease the visibility of the trailer. These include:

1. The lights may be burned out or otherwise damaged.
2. The jackknifed truck tractor will hide the forwardmost side marker light of a flatbed or similar trailer.
3. Dirt and dust from the road will reduce the conspicuity of low mounted marker lights. Diesel exhaust may cover the high mounted lights.
4. Straps, load binders or other tie down materials may block visibility of the side marker lights.
5. 5. A mailbox, brush or parked vehicle may block the rear side marker light.

There are currently efforts in place to increase the visibility of tractor trailers. Increasing the number of lights, higher visibility paint and reflective tape are cost effective means to dramatically improve the visibility of trailers. In addition, drivers should avoid backing across roadways at night. If they are caught in this situation, they can attract attention by turning the tractor trailer lights on and off.

How to avoid a trailer side underride accident:

1. Approach stopped or slow moving vehicles with caution, even if they do not appear to be blocking your lane.

2. Truck tractors and other large vehicles have a readily observable pattern of clearance lights on the cab. If you observe these and the vehicle is moving slowly or stopped, slow down and try to determine whether the vehicle has a trailer.
3. Use high beam lighting when you are not following or approaching other traffic. If necessary, use high beams to view the area adjacent to a stopped or slow moving vehicle.
4. Pay attention to warnings from the truck e.g. flashing lights, turn signals, horn or pedestrians who might be attempting to flag you to stop.
5. If a collision becomes inevitable, brake as hard as possible and duck, the trailer may only damage the roof and more elevated portions of your automobile.

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