

V O L V O

How to manage your truck
driving time effectively to comply
with the tachograph legislation

Volvo Trucks

Since June 2019, smart tachographs have been mandatory for all new trucks sold in the EU. By August 2025, all trucks used in cross-border assignments must be fitted with a second-generation smart tachograph.

The technology allows enforcement agencies to read data from them remotely, meaning that there is no need for trucks to be stopped and the journey disrupted for a routine tachograph reading. The introduction of digital tachographs will allow for the technology to be used more consistently, compliantly and correctly as the consequences for not doing so will be much more easily detected and penalized. As a result, safety and compliance levels will be raised which will improve professionalism and reputation of the trucking industry.

I have put together some advice and tips to help you plan effectively to make sure you comply with the tachograph legislation and you reach your destination in good time.

EU tachograph legislation: working and resting times

The EU provides a common set of rules for driving times, as well as minimum rest periods for trucks and passenger vehicles, subject to specified exceptions and national derogations.

The main EU rules on driving hours are that you must not drive more than:

- 9 hours in a day - this can be extended to 10 hours twice a week
- 56 hours in a week
- 90 hours in any 2 consecutive weeks

When it comes to resting times, the rules stipulate that:

- Daily rest period of at least 11 hours, with an exception of going down to 9 hours maximum three times a week. Daily rest can be split into 3 hours rest followed by 9 hours rest to make a total of 12 hours daily rest
- Weekly rest is 45 continuous hours, which can be reduced every second week to 24 hours. Weekly rest to be taken after six days of working. Any reductions in weekly rest must be compensated for by adding the missed hours to another rest block
- Breaks of at least 45 minutes (separable into 15 minutes followed by 30 minutes) should be taken after 4 ½ hours.



Tips on planning your next journey:

Set realistic time expectations

It's important to use good communication skills with your transport planner- keep them up to date with how your journey is going and have open and honest dialogue over what is possible in a day. It's important for you, your customer and the transport planner to have realistic time expectations. Always use caution when giving a destination delivery time, it's better to be a time pessimist than over-estimate how quickly you can get to a destination.

Plan your breaks

It's good to plan how many breaks you are going to take and when you are going to have them. For example, if you are driving for 800km in a day, will you have two 45mins breaks, or a 15min/30min/15min/30min break? Work out after how many kilometers you want to have these breaks and how long you think it will take to get there.

Have a destination in mind to sleep in and have alternatives

Keep in mind that truck parks in Europe can fill up from 6pm. You should try to get to your chosen truck stop whilst there are still plenty of free spaces.

Prepare for the unexpected

You need to factor into your plans that things don't always go to plan on the road. Think through different scenarios you may have to face and work through alternatives, so when you meet changing circumstances on the road, you can stay calm and are ready to react.



Use an app

Apps are a great way to plan your trip. You can find alternative places to park, have breaks and fill up with diesel. You can also get information on traffic conditions and see weather reports for your location, destination and places along your route. Here are the details of three useful apps.

Truck Parking Europe has details of over 34,000 truck parking areas and spots. The app allows you or your transport planner to book a parking spot in advance.

Trucker Timer is an app that allows you to easily keep track of your driving hours within EU legislation.

PTV Navigator is an app made for truckers, guiding you on routes suitable for freight traffic and the app also features a truck parking assistant.

Running out of time and the rest stop is full? Here is what you can do:

Continue to the nearest safe place

You are allowed an extra 15 minutes to get to the nearest safe place. What is a safe parking area? A safe parking area for a truck must be fit for purpose. It should be well-lit and preferably gated. Make sure there are other trucks nearby and people. Ask yourself whether the area feels secure and you feel safe sleeping there. If you don't, drive to the next stop.

If you plan on filling up with petrol, wake up earlier and fill up in the morning. This means if you find you are a victim of diesel theft, you won't lose your whole tank.

Document your reasons

You need to make sure you document the reasons for going over time and report this to the company you work for.

Here are some important things to remember when creating your report:

- It's important to reflect on the cause- was it because the truck park was full, or have you been too optimistic with your time estimation? Have a think about what could be done differently next time.
- Use a calendar to make a note of the reason(s) and make sure this is consistent with the data from your tachograph. You also need to make sure you can present this information in a clear way. If you drive in different countries, you should be able to clearly explain to the authorities in a way that they can understand. This will help to show you are a responsible driver and any violation was an isolated incident.
- Remember you can't run out of driving time more than once a month. Police will check the past 30 days of your record, so it's important to make sure running out of driving time is a one-off incident, rather than a regular one.

What you should never do if you are running out of driving time:

- Park on the hard shoulder or other unsafe place
- Drive past your allocated time and not document what has happened and the reasons for it
- Illegally park your truck
- Never park next to the side of ramps

