

## The REAL Professional Driver

No one likes to be referred to as naïve. If you don't believe it, try telling someone they are naïve and watch their reaction. (Don't try this at home!) Well, be honest, are you going to simply accept it when someone says it to you? The real problem is that, when a person is referred to as naïve, even it bears some truth, what point does it serve? The only point I can think of is that we are all naïve when it comes to some things. A similar word, but even worse for an adult is "jeune", which means childish, immature or juvenile which probably fits some drivers very well.

The point here is to recognize that many of today's drivers fit the description above, while others are inexperienced, untrained and/or do not realize the gravity of the driving task. Certainly, not all drivers are in these categories. It's just that our attention immediately turns to those drivers who obviously react in a childish or inexperienced manner, in certain situations. Sometimes even a normal driving situation such as merging or following heavy traffic can switch these drivers' actions from mature to jeune.

Now the REAL point: you've heard all of this before, you've heard how you should react and some are doing it right. Some are doing it right SOMETIMES, which is not enough. Experience has taught you that you must expect situations that many drivers don't expect. FORGET the pride, frustration or anger. If for no other reason, there are far too many elements that you cannot control unless you prevent involvement in any of these *chancy* situations. You can do it ALL the time, but WILL you? Are you willing to put your answer in writing? If not, you are leaving yourself an "out", and you'll probably use it at some time. That one time might just be the one that bites you, very hard. On the other hand, whether you put it in writing or not, you can do it ALL of the time, regardless of your emotional state when some driver commits a dangerous maneuver. You ARE a *Professional Driver* but that term carries a definition well beyond the reach of most common drivers. You also know, or have seen, other drivers of commercial vehicles that you might be hard pressed to call *Professional*. If you have set yourself apart from those drivers, you must be determined to be a *Professional* ALL of the time.

There is also another element that's very important. We'll never know EVERYTHING about our jobs and we will never face EVERY situation in our jobs. You can't really call that naïve though. That's life. We also don't need to learn everything the hard way; by making the mistake ourselves. There are many problems you can avoid and you have, no doubt, already done that many times. Keep your mind (and ears) open for anything you can learn, whether it involves driving, load securement, equipment or anything else. Be willing to know more.