

Lady Riders

Copyright Sandy Long

Many ladies ride with their spouses/partners, but do not drive. Some do it all the time, some during vacations, some only once in awhile. Some of these non driving ladies that ride along all the time take care of paperwork, keep the truck clean and some with flatbedding partners, help tarp.

A young driver that I recently spoke with told me of taking his young wife with him on the truck. "It was a disaster!" he related. "I pull flatbed and every time I would have to climb my load when she was with me, she would hollar and scream right there in the yard, worried I would fall off! It was embarrassing! Then one day, I loaded a load of pipe. She was standing there watching me, wringing her hands and yelling every so often for me to be careful. I was up on top of the pipe when I saw it was shifting. Yelling at her to get out of the way, she stood there, just looked at me, and started to yell at me for talking harsh to her. I took a jump down off the load to the ground and pushed her out of the way, 'bout killed myself! Quit taking her with me after that...she just couldn't understand how dangerous it was and how much more dangerous she made my job."

Many mills and factories do not allow non drivers/passengers into their facilities. Some mills don't even let in a co driver or allow a pet inside the gates. As the above young driver found out, it can be dangerous for non drivers who aren't savvy about the job to be around loading/unloading areas.

Recently, we had a driver take his wife and 3 young kids straight through a factory work area to the restrooms, right among the machinery. He could of taken them around the building and through the offices, but didn't. His actions almost cost my company a shipper and could of gotten one of his kids hurt! The bad thing is, is that though my company doesn't have a rider policy, my boss would allow the guys to take their wives along once in awhile, but not kids. Since this incident, he has banned any riders at all.

One driver I used to know had the type of wife that thought she knew everything about everything and that he was an idiot...she was a non driver, they had been married for about 50 years. After their kids were grown and had moved away, she started riding with him some times. I ran into them at a local eatery one weekend, where she proceeded to tell me that they had gotten hung up waiting to load at a shippers. She said, "after a couple of hours HE wouldn't do anything, so I went inside and gave that shipping clerk what for!!" He continued the story when she stopped for a breath, "I didn't know she was goin' to do that...she just said she was going to use the restroom. They refused to load me after she done that."

As riders in a truck, there are some rules you should follow.

1. Make sure that the company allows riders and that there is proper documentation for you to be there, usually a permission letter from the company. Some companies require additional insurance for riders.
2. Unless you know what you are doing, stay in the truck at shippers/receivers if allowed in the gates, or wait patiently in the guard shack or place provided if you are not allowed inside.

3. Unless your driver partner has taught you how to assist them in securing a load, stay either in the truck, or in a safe place to observe what is going on. Never shout at a driver on top of his/her load unless it is an emergency. Don't panic them doing their job, you are taking a chance at distracting them and making it even more dangerous.

4. If you are in a load yard or warehouse, stay out of the way of other trucks and fork lifts.

5. Always ask permission from personnel to go inside a warehouse or factory to use the facilities if they are available. Stay in the designated areas and away from machinery.

6. Unless your driver/partner has taught you how to interact with shipping or receiving personnel, don't interact with them at all other than asking where the restroom might be. It is not your place to talk about the load in any way unless you know how to do it properly and with your partner's consent and knowledge.

7. If you are getting out of the truck alone for any reason, make sure that your driver/partner knows you are getting out and where you are going. Carry identification with you at all times along with your partner's trucking company, truck number etc.

Riding in the truck with your spouse/partner can be fun. You get to see some country that you perhaps haven't seen before and you get to spend some quality time with a loved one. If you do it often enough to know the ropes, you can be a valuable asset to your driver/partner's quality of life while on the road enjoying one another's company.