



Fresh For Your Success. Right For Our Environment.™

Duck Delivery Produce, Inc.
8448 NE 33rd Drive, Suite 120
Portland, OR 97211-2163
503-288-9380 Telephone
503-288-0400 Fax

TRUE STORY!

July 20th, 2009 – The Importance of Driver Awareness

It was the beginning of Monday afternoon rush hour on I – 5. The roads were just starting to get crowded, but the truck drivers still had room to travel safely at 55 mph.

Justin Frasier was driving north in the slow lane on his way back from the Eugene/Springfield route. Driver trainer Kirk Cornell sat in the passenger seat. Justin had been driving for Duck Delivery Produce, Inc. for a year and his annual driving evaluation was almost over. So far so good.

Kirk was impressed by Justin’s calm, easy manner, his friendly customer service skills, and his solid driving ability. Justin was experienced behind the wheel. Before working for Duck, he drove big box and lumber trucks. Justin felt that hauling heavy and large loads taught him the value of paying attention during the drive.

Justin and Kirk were discussing the recent training class and the importance of driver awareness when Justin first noticed the BNR Auto Wrecking truck about 80 feet ahead of them. A huge piece of cellophane flew out of one of the three steel dumpsters on the BNR flatbed. Justin quickly checked his mirrors. He watched the cellophane disappear underneath a car behind him and noticed that the lane on his left was clear.

Just as Justin looked back at the road, the last dumpster on the flatbed bounced off the trailer and landed on the freeway directly in front of his truck! Traveling at a swift 55 mph, the dumpster fell to its side and spilled its contents onto the asphalt. Car bumpers, old engine blocks, rusty auto parts, and big chunks of 2’ x 2’ steel somersaulted down the road and instantly barricaded the lane. Thinking the accident was inevitable, Kirk braced himself.

With only a second to react, Justin instinctively checked his mirrors again and whipped his empty truck into the clear left lane. Kirk looked into the right mirror in disbelief. The dumpster continued to slide for another 100 feet and spewed the remaining car parts into the crashing motorists. Tires squealed and vehicles collided as drivers tried to avoid the huge pieces of debris scattered on the road. The dumpster slid into the ditch and finally came to a stop.

The BNR semi quickly pulled off on the right shoulder. As Justin and Kirk passed the truck, they looked at the load. Not one of the dumpsters had been strapped down. They both shook their heads.

Kirk looked at Justin and grinned. “So, do you have any advice for our fellow drivers?”

Justin thought for a moment. He was glad he was paying attention. He was glad he was following at a safe distance and had room to switch lanes. He was glad he avoided the accident. He didn’t want to hurt his passenger and cost his company thousands of dollars. Justin took a deep breath.

“This just shows how fast stuff can happen,” he said. “I drive I – 5 all day. I know it’s easy to let your mind wander. But you can’t. You’ve just got to stay alert. You just have to.”

Kirk nodded in head in agreement. “By the way,” he said. “You passed your annual evaluation.”