



WRITING GOOD DIRECTIONS

Trying to follow bad directions when navigating a nearly 70 foot truck and trailer in unfamiliar territory can be exasperating, infuriating and dangerous. The problem with bad directions is they don't look bad until they put a driver into a bad situation. Backing a trailer into traffic to change directions or rerouting to find another way can be a high-stress and unnecessary undertaking, not to mention time consuming. Directions are generally not intended for drivers who have been to a location many times. Rather, for those now or even seasoned drivers who haven't been to that location. You might think of directions as marking a trail for those who follow. The better you mark your trail, the easier it will be for those who will come later.

Writing good directions requires 4 elements – they need to be CLEAR, CONCISE, COMPLETE and ACCURATE (C3A).

CLEAR – Use the cardinal directions (N, S, E, W) to describe all travel and turns, not left or right. There is never a doubt about which direction to travel or turn, no matter which direction a driver approaches from. Use street names or numbers to describe route and “turn onto” intersections. DO NOT use terms like “6 lights and turn left”.

CONCISE – Be as brief as possible, while at the same time giving all the pertinent information necessary to ensure that anyone else reading your directions will be able to understand and follow them without error.

COMPLETE – “Clear” and “Concise” here work together. Without being overly verbal, make sure *all* necessary information is included. Such things as “stay in left/right lane approaching xxx intersection to make the turn” when such information will be helpful or necessary to help other drivers safely navigate the route.

ACCURATE – Use miles and tenths of miles to describe longer distances. These give other drivers notice of how far they must travel before looking for your next cue. Use hundreds and tens of feet to describe shorter distances. Drivers will understand that they must maintain their attention on the route to see what you are describing. A helpful device for describing a route is a hand-held recorder. All the pertinent information can be recorded as you encounter it, including problem areas. You can then write/type it at your convenience before turning it in to Dispatch for updating in the system.

The introduction and near-universal acceptance of the GPS has made the driver's job immeasurably easier, but they are not foolproof. The man behind the wheel who's experienced the errors that a GPS can create is the real key to good C3A directions.

In a recent memo to the drivers, we asked for everyone's assistance with updating directions. We hope this information is helpful to you when doing so and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep this information up-to-date.

Good luck and we will be looking for those C3A directions!!!



Mike

Peterson

... is the lucky winner of the gift certificate this month for turning in his signed newsletter.

In lieu of signing & turning in the newsletter this month, please keep this with you for future reference when submitting updated directions.

THANK YOU!