



THE TOOL BOX

Have you ever taken a good look at the toolbox of a professional mechanic? It is big, has wheels, more drawers than you can count and the contents are organized. Have you ever noticed that the professional mechanic can, behind his back, reach into his toolbox and grab the tool he needs and immediately start to use it? He is a professional mechanic; you are not. You have a collection of tools possibly kept in an old ammunition can which requires you to dig through the contents in an attempt to find the tool you need. Have you examined the quality of a professional mechanic's tools? Did you find a single tool die stamped "Made in China" or "Made in Taiwan"? Can you say the same about the tools in your toolbox?

When the shop is closed you aren't there therefore you do not see the professional mechanic carefully checking the condition of and cleaning his equipment. He is aware that his livelihood depends on having the right tool for the job and being sure that the tool is in good condition and ready to use irregardless if a particular tool is used almost every day or only rarely.

A professional driver is a lot like a professional mechanic except that a professional driver's toolbox is located between his ears. This cranial toolbox contains four groups of tools that must be in good condition and ready to use. These groups of tools are Knowledge: The condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience and training. Skill: The ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance. Judgment: A process of forming an opinion or making a decision by discerning and comparing. Foresight: The ability to perceive the significance and nature of events before they occur. The drivers sharing the road with you may have some of these tools but of what quantity and what quality? You never know! Your "tools" must be of top quality, accessible and in condition for immediate use to avoid being involved in an accident due to the incorrect action or actions of others.

To sum it up, you may not learn anything new in a safety meeting. A trained and experienced driver should have all the tools. But just like the mechanic examining his tools when the shop is closed we are taking this time to check ours. Some may be a bit rusty because we haven't used them in a while however, we know that tool may be needed tomorrow. Bad habits are like worn tools; they sneak up on you if you are not careful.

Having all the tools is not the complete answer. You can picture in your mind's eye the professional mechanic standing in front of his well-equipped toolbox desperately checking through his pockets. He left the key at home. All the tools he would need and he can't get to them. You as a professional driver have a key to your toolbox as well. All your knowledge, skill, judgment and foresight are not available to you if you left your key at home, in the dispatch office, on the dock or even lost it while driving down the highway. Your key is your **ATTITUDE**. A professional attitude makes your tools available to deal with the mistakes of those amateur drivers sharing the road with you and keeps you from making mistakes of your own..

