Stale Green Lights

Commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) can’t stop the way passenger vehicles can. Total stopping distance for a CMV is significantly more than that of a passenger vehicle. Large trucks will need much more space to safely come to a complete stop. Included in total stopping distance is the braking distance, these two are not the same. Braking distance is how far a CMV travels after the brakes have been applied, a driver must first perceive a potential hazard and then react to the potential hazard and apply the brakes. Stopping distance of a CMV is affected by perception time, reaction time, road and weather conditions, vehicle size and weight, speed, and other variables. At 40 MPH a loaded class 8 truck needs about 169 feet to come to a full stop.

Commercial motor vehicle drivers should always be looking ahead and monitoring what is going on around them so that they can react safely to any potential hazards. Often when approaching intersections the first time you see a traffic light it may be green. This is what is referred to as a stale green light.

A stale green light occurs when you are unable to safely judge how soon the light will begin to change. It can be very dangerous for a driver to attempt to beat a traffic light that is in the process of changing from green to amber to red.

When you encounter a stale green light be prepared to stop, the light may change and you will need to stop in a safe and controlled manner. Running a red light is an extremely dangerous decision and drivers in front of you may stop suddenly when a green light changes.

Safe, professional, drivers are always on the lookout for stale green lights and will make the necessary adjustments to be able to stop safely.

- Always look ahead and continuously monitor your surroundings
- Anticipate potential problems and make proper adjustments
- Identify potential hazards and react safely