



ROADSIDEREADER

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF INDEPENDENT TRUCKERS

4 WHEN THE SKY TURNS

Summer storms don't wait ...

Summer storms can turn a routine haul into a dangerous ride in minutes. This feature looks at how truckers can stay ahead of pop-up thunderstorms, flash flooding, high winds, and poor visibility by checking radar, planning safe stops, giving themselves room, and knowing when it is time to park it.

It also highlights the judgment that comes with experience behind the wheel. From avoiding unsafe shoulders to respecting wind, water, and low visibility, the piece reinforces a simple message for drivers: no schedule, load, or delivery window is worth gambling against dangerous summer weather.

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12 Keep an Eye on Yourself

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Find these State Capitals
+ Sudoku



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LongHaul Direct

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WHEN THE SKY TURNS

Truckers Know Summer Storms Don't Wait

Summer storms have a way of changing the road in a hurry.

One minute, the interstate is dry, the mirrors are clear, and the load is moving right on schedule. The next, the sky turns black, rain sheets across the windshield, traffic taps the brakes, and the road disappears in a blur of spray and headlights.

For truckers, storm season is not just a forecast. It is part of the job.

Pop-up thunderstorms are one of summer's biggest hazards on the interstate because they do not always give much warning. A driver may leave a truck stop under blue skies and run into high winds, ponding water, lightning, or near-zero visibility 30 miles down the road. In a four-wheeler, that can be scary. In an 80,000-pound rig, it can turn dangerous fast.

That is why planning matters before the first raindrop hits the glass.

Experienced drivers know to check the radar, not just the high and low temperature. A quick look at the route can show whether storms are building along the interstate, whether a line of weather is crossing ahead, or whether a safer stop makes more sense than pushing into trouble. Weather apps, local alerts, CB chatter, and highway message boards all become part of the same decision: keep rolling, slow down, or park it

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The hardest call is often knowing when to get off the road.

Truckers are used to pressure. Delivery windows, hours-of-service limits, dispatch updates, customer expectations, and traffic delays all ride in the cab. But storm season adds a different kind of pressure. The safe decision is not always the fast one. Sometimes the smartest move is finding a legal, safe pull-off before the worst of the storm arrives.

That does not mean stopping on the shoulder unless there is no other choice. In heavy rain, other drivers may follow taillights without realizing a vehicle is stopped. Shoulders can also soften, flood, or leave little room between a rig and traffic. Whenever possible, the better option is a rest area, truck stop, wide parking lot, or designated safe area away from travel lanes.

High wind brings its own danger. Empty trailers and light loads can become unstable when gusts hit broadside, especially on bridges, open stretches, and elevated roadways. Flash flooding is just as unforgiving. Water over the road can hide washouts, stalled vehicles, or depth changes that are impossible to judge from the cab.

Visibility may be the most immediate threat. When rain comes down hard enough, brake lights vanish. Lane markings fade. Spray from surrounding traffic turns the windshield white. That is the moment when speed, following distance, and patience matter most.

Summer freight keeps moving. So do storms.

The best drivers respect both. They watch the sky, read the radar, give themselves room, and know that no load is worth gambling against wind, water, and poor visibility. On the interstate, the road ahead can change in seconds.

The goal is simple: arrive safe, even if it means arriving a little later.



Top U.S. Fourth of July destinations:

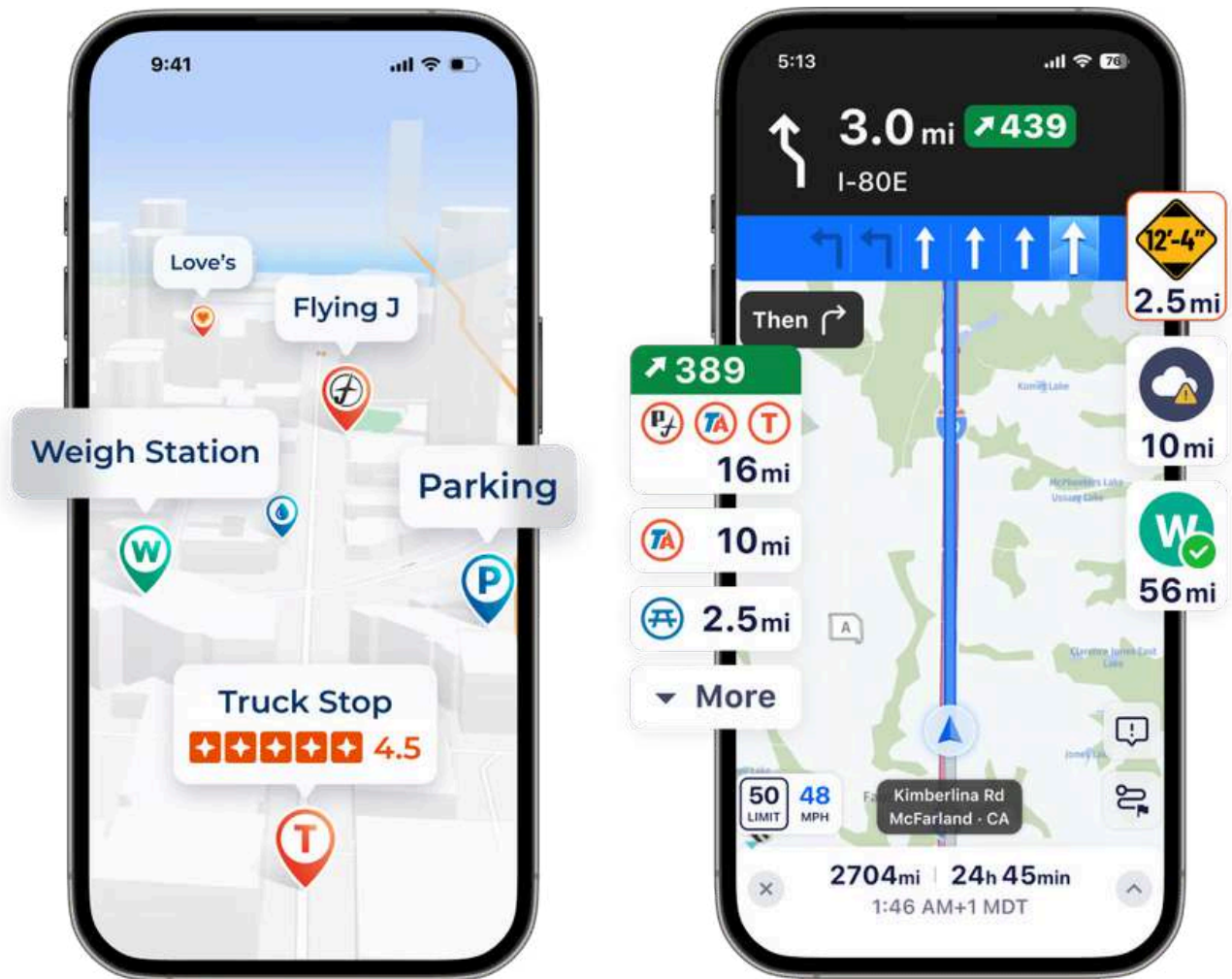
Philadelphia – The birthplace of American independence gets the top spot this year because 2026 marks America’s 250th anniversary. Philadelphia has Wawa Welcome America running through July 4, a major Unity Concert on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, America250 events at Independence Hall, and the obvious historic weight of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

Washington, D.C. – Still the most iconic setting: fireworks over the National Mall, with the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Capitol, and Smithsonian museums all in the same frame. The National Park Service bills the D.C. celebration as a national gathering around “our country’s most iconic monuments and historic sites.”

New York – For pure spectacle, NYC is hard to beat. Macy’s is marking the 50th edition of its Fourth of July Fireworks show in 2026, with the skyline, East River, Brooklyn Bridge, and huge national TV audience giving it a big-event feel.

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When the heat rides shotgun

Summer heat does not always announce itself with a warning.

Sometimes it starts with a long morning behind the wheel, a hot cab at a shipper, a slow unload on blacktop, and a bottle of water that ran out two stops ago. By the time a driver feels weak, lightheaded, or sick to the stomach, heat stress may already be taking hold.

For truckers, summer heat is more than uncomfortable. It can become a safety issue fast.

Drivers spend long hours moving between two very different worlds: the controlled air of the cab and the punishing heat outside it. A truck stop parking lot can feel like an oven. A loading dock may offer little shade and no breeze. Asphalt, concrete, and metal hold heat long after the sun has done its worst. Add work gloves, boots, physical labor, tight schedules, and limited access to cool recovery space, and the risk climbs quickly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says workers exposed to hot environments may be at risk for heat-related illnesses, including heat exhaustion, heat stroke, heat cramps, and heat rash. OSHA's basic prevention message is simple: water, rest, and shade. For drivers, the hard part is building those basics into a day that does not always leave much room for comfort.

Hydration is the first defense. Not just a big drink after the headache starts, but steady water

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through the day. Coffee, energy drinks, and soda may keep a driver alert, but they should not replace water when the heat index rises. A cooler with extra bottles, electrolyte packets, fruit, or light snacks can make a difference, especially on routes where the next good stop is farther away than expected.

The warning signs are worth knowing because heat stress can sneak up. Heat exhaustion may show up as headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, or decreased urine output, according to OSHA and NIOSH guidance. Those are not symptoms to tough out from one exit to the next. They are signs to stop, cool down, and get fluids in the body.

Heat stroke is more serious. Confusion, fainting, slurred speech, seizures, or hot, dry skin can signal a medical emergency. At that point, the answer is not another bottle of water and a few more miles. It is immediate help.

Rest breaks matter, too. A few minutes in air conditioning can help the body catch up. So can parking in shade, loosening outer layers, cooling the face and neck, and avoiding extra exertion during the hottest stretch of the afternoon when possible. NIOSH recommends adjusting work and rest periods as heat, humidity, sunshine, and workload increase.

The trouble with heat is how ordinary it feels at first. Everybody sweats in July. Everybody gets tired. Every driver has pushed through a rough day.

But heat stress does not care about experience, deadlines, or pride. It builds quietly, mile by mile and stop by stop, until the body starts losing the fight.

The safest drivers treat summer heat like any other road hazard. They plan for it. They respect it. And when the warning signs show up, they park it before the heat makes the decision for them.

*WHERE
is Gizmo?*



This summer, keep your eyes peeled for Gizmo, NAIT's furry mascot. He'll be out on the road, wagging his way across the miles. Spot him? Don't paws – snap a pic, send it our way!

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Don't Let the Miles Knock Your Health Off Course

Summer is busy season on America's roads.

Families are headed to the beach. Campers are rolling toward state parks. Construction crews are out in force. Freight keeps moving through it all, and for truckers, that means longer days, tighter schedules, hotter stops, heavier traffic, and fewer easy chances to reset.

That kind of season can wear on a driver's health fast.

It starts small. A skipped meal here. A short night there. A prescription that needs refilling, but the next stop is two states away. A sore throat that turns into something worse because there was no time to sit in a waiting room. A follow-up appointment that gets pushed back again because the load came first.

For independent truckers especially, staying healthy on the road takes more than willpower. It takes planning — and knowing what kind of help is available before there is a problem.

Food is usually the first challenge. Summer routes do not always leave room for balanced meals, and truck stop options can get repetitive fast. Still, small choices add up. Keeping water, fruit, nuts, protein bars, or easy cooler meals in the cab can help a driver avoid running on caffeine, fast food, and gas station snacks all day. The goal is not perfection. It is having a few better options within reach when the road gets long.

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Sleep is harder. Heat, noise, traffic, loading delays, and inconsistent schedules can make real rest difficult. But poor sleep affects reaction time, decision-making, blood pressure, mood, and overall health. Even during peak travel season, drivers benefit from treating rest like part of the job, not a leftover luxury at the end of the day.

Prescription planning matters, too. A refill that seems simple at home can become a headache when a driver is halfway across the country. Before a long stretch, drivers should know how many doses they have left, whether their pharmacy can transfer prescriptions, whether mail-order is available, and whether their plan allows extended refills. It is much easier to solve that problem before the bottle is empty.

Telehealth can also be a useful tool for drivers who cannot easily make it to a doctor's office. For minor illnesses, medication questions, follow-ups, and some routine concerns, a virtual visit may help a driver get guidance without losing half a day. But drivers should check their coverage before they need it. Not every plan handles telehealth the same way, and costs can vary.

The same is true for urgent care. When a driver gets sick or hurt away from home, knowing which urgent care clinics are in network can save money and stress. Emergency rooms are there for emergencies, but for many non-life-threatening issues, urgent care may be faster and less expensive.

That is why summer is a good time for truckers to take a hard look at their coverage. Does it travel well? Are out-of-state providers covered? Is telehealth included? What happens if a prescription is lost, delayed, or needs to be refilled on the road? What number should a driver call before walking into a clinic?

Health does not stay parked at home. It rides in the cab, mile after mile.

The best time to figure out what your insurance covers is not when you are sick, tired, and staring at a clinic sign in another state. It is before the season gets away from you.

A little planning can keep a small health issue from becoming a roadside problem. And for truckers moving through the busiest months of the year, that can make all the difference.





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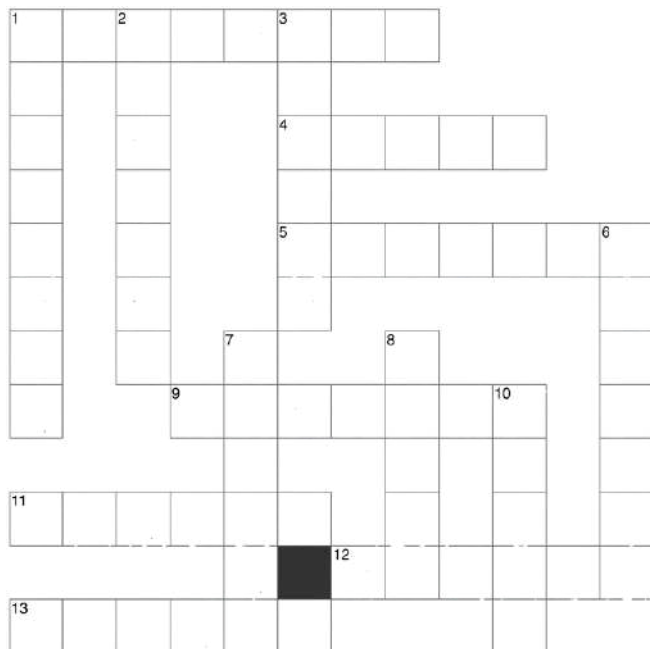
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Sudoku

The goal is to fill a 9x9 grid with digits 1 through 9, ensuring each digit appears only once in each row, column, and 3x3 subgrid.

Crossword Puzzle

State Capitals



ACROSS

- 1 - Ohio's capital, named for an explorer
- 4 - Oregon's capital, a name meaning 'peace'
- 5 - Washington's capital at Puget Sound's end
- 9 - New Hampshire's capital, known for its coach
- 11 - Colorado's 'Mile-High City' capital
- 12 - Montana's capital, founded during a gold rush
- 13 - Alaska's capital, accessible only by air or sea

DOWN

- 1 - Wyoming's capital, known for 'Frontier Days'
- 2 - Michigan's capital city
- 3 - Massachusetts' capital, a historic harbor city
- 6 - Maine's capital on the Kennebec River
- 7 - Kansas capital, famous for *Brown v. Board of Education*
- 8 - Idaho's capital, known as the 'City of Trees'
- 10 - Delaware's capital, named after an English port

