



DRIVING ON HILLS



The force of gravity causes all vehicles to slow down on upgrades, making it difficult for a driver to maintain a constant speed.

Just like with upgrades, an appropriate speed is necessary when going downhill, and the driver should choose a speed slow enough to allow a vehicle's brakes to hold the vehicle without the use of its brakes to the point of overheating and fading. If a driver has to continually increase the pressure applied to the brakes to get the same stopping power, the brakes will eventually fade until the driver has little to no stopping control.

When selecting an appropriate speed, the driver needs to consider:
The total weight of the vehicle and its cargo;
The grade's steepness and length; and
The weather and road conditions.

The steepness and length of the grade as well as the weight of the load of the vehicle play an important role in determining which gear a driver needs to select to drive safely. The steeper and/or longer the grade and the heavier the load, the lower the gear the driver needs to select.

Please keep in mind a large percentage of the grades in the western states are in the 6% range. A large percentage of the grades in the eastern states are 8, 9, or 10% and sometimes even more. The eastern grades are often shorter but this is not always so.

An important percentage of company trucks are automatic; therefore, drivers must select the low gear and apply the engine break before the down hill in order to avoid over speeds.



For manual transmissions the driver should be in either 8th or 9th gear. Please be advised we use software to monitor speeds and will discipline drivers that break speed policies. North American transport services has a 65-mph maximum speed for company trucks and 68-mph for owner operators.