

Help your fleet drivers avoid rear-end collisions.



Your drivers need to know that tailgating other vehicles is unacceptable.

Most drivers would admit that when in a hurry they sometimes follow the vehicle in front of them too closely, but that's not a good idea. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, rear-end crashes are the most frequently occurring type of collision, accounting for approximately 29% of all accidents in the U.S.¹

By failing to allow ample following distance, drivers rob themselves of time needed to react in an emergency, such as the car in front braking suddenly for an animal. The odds of a collision are even greater when tailgating behavior is combined with speeding or distracted driving.

A good rule of thumb to gauge following distance.

Your fleet drivers can help to avoid rear-end crashes by slowing down and dropping back from the vehicle in front, or by passing that vehicle if they can do so safely. They need to know that tailgating is not an option.

A common tool used to determine proper following distance is the 3-second rule. It works by choosing a fixed point that is even with the car in front of you, such as a road sign or building. If you reach that fixed point before you can count to three, you're following too closely.

Prepare your drivers before they take the wheel.

While most of your drivers are aware that it's wise to maintain proper following distance, it's good to remind them periodically of your safety first policy with timely tips such as:

- **Use the 3-second rule.** When the road is dry and straight, the 3-second rule is a simple way to give yourself enough time to react if a car or truck in front of you stops unexpectedly.
- **Be aware of the weather.** If the road is wet, snowy or icy, the 3-second rule won't apply, and you'll need more room to stop. You must also be prepared in case a vehicle in front of you skids.
- **Factor in visibility.** If you're traveling dusk-to-dawn, that underscores the need for headlights that are clean and work properly, and for clean and clear windshields to minimize the impact of glare.
- **Know the vehicle you're driving.** Does it have freshly adjusted brakes and ample tire tread? If not, you'll need more space between your vehicle and the one in front of you to slow down.

More situations that call for extra following distance.

While the 3-second rule is a good standard, you should make your drivers aware that there are other instances—in addition to when roads are slippery—when allowing more space between vehicles is prudent:

- **Pulling a trailer or carrying a heavy load.** Due to added momentum, the extra weight makes it much harder to stop.
- **Following a large vehicle that blocks your view ahead.** You may need the extra distance in front and to the sides to react if another vehicle up ahead starts a chain reaction by braking suddenly.
- **Following a large truck or tractor-trailer.** These vehicles have many blind spots and usually need additional lane space to make turns, so slow down early and allow plenty of room.
- **Following a school bus.** Buses make frequent stops, including ones at railroad crossings. When a bus's safety lights are blinking, slow down and be on the lookout for aggressive or inattentive drivers.
- **Being passed by another driver.** Slow down to allow room in front of your car so the driver can safely cross into your lane ahead of you.
- **Merging on the freeway.** In dense flows, traffic can back up quickly. Scan traffic patterns to anticipate when you might need to stop.
- **Following motorcycles.** When a motorcycle goes down, you want to avoid hitting the rider. Motorcyclists lose control most often on wet or icy roads, bridge gratings, railroad tracks and gravel.

New technology for better fleet safety management.

Consider the purchase of electronic devices for your fleet that look ahead to spot other vehicles or obstacles in the roadway. When the device senses a dangerous situation, such as one of your cars or trucks rapidly overtaking a slower moving vehicle, it emits an audible alarm prompting the driver to take corrective action.

While your first priority should be training drivers to be safe, adding this technology affords another layer of protection. In some cases, such devices can be integrated with GPS systems, camera-in-cabin recorders and online training suites so that frequent triggering of the device will alert management that there's an ongoing issue with a particular driver.



How your drivers should react when being tailgated

Advise your drivers to:

- Allow extra room between your car and the car directly ahead of you
- Brake slowly before coming to a complete stop, tapping your brake lightly to warn the tailgater you're slowing down
- If possible, safely change lanes to help you lose the tailgater
- If you can't change lanes, slow down to allow the tailgater to go around you; if that doesn't work, pull off the road when it's safe and let the tailgater pass

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