



Nationwide®  
is on your side

# Rear-End Collisions



## When you rear-end someone:

- Occupants of both vehicles are often injured
- In heavy traffic, you may be subsequently rear-ended
- You are almost always found to be at fault, even if the driver in front:
  - Slammed on their brakes unexpectedly
  - Cut in front of you at the last minute

**You are responsible for maintaining an adequate gap in front of you!**

## You need time and distance to perceive, react and stop

### Safe Following Distance:

Most people cannot visually determine distances between moving vehicles. Best practice, recommended by the National Safety Council and most state driving manuals, is the seconds-counting method:

- Determine the minimum number of seconds for your vehicle — 3 seconds for sedans and light trucks
- When a vehicle in front passes a fixed object, such as a light post or sign, begin counting: One one-thousand, two one-thousand...
- If your vehicle passes the fixed object prior to your seconds, slow down and re-count

### Recommended Min. Following Distance (Seconds)

3 sec: Sedans and Light Trucks



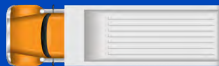
4 sec: Large Vans



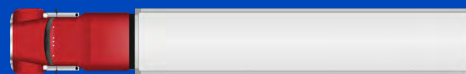
4 sec: Light Vehicles Pulling Trailers



5 - 6 sec: Med/Large Straight Trucks



6 - 8 sec: Tractor-Trailers



**Increase your following distance further during inclement weather: rain, snow, ice and fog.**

### Perception Distance:

Realizing you need to brake, which is influenced by age and alertness:

- Fatigue
- Illness
- Distractions

### Reaction Distance:

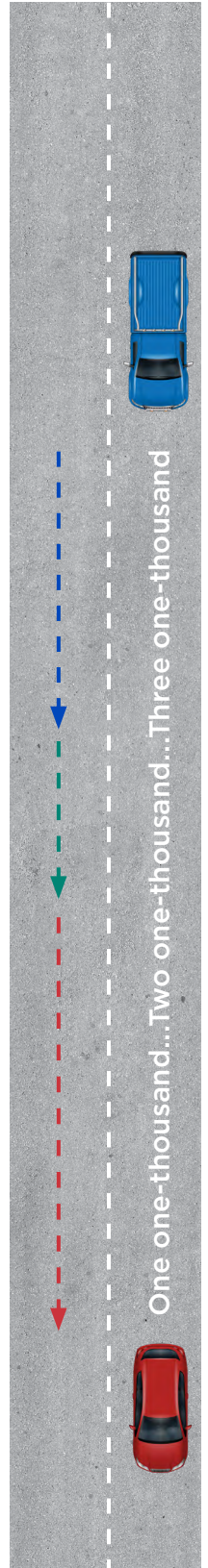
Moving your foot to the brake and applying it.

### Stopping Distance:

Time it takes for vehicle to stop once brake is depressed.

Influenced by:

- Speed
- Size and weight of vehicle
- Condition of brakes/tires
- Weather: rain, ice, snow
- Vehicles with air brakes need additional distance due to brake lag time

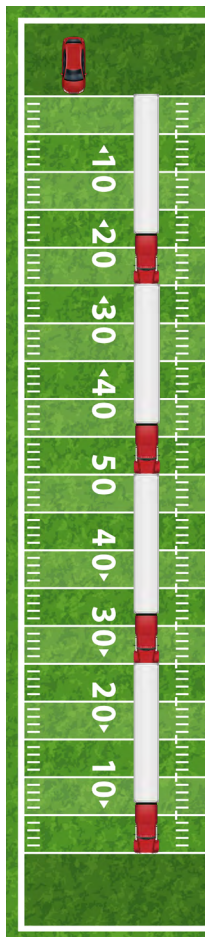


**Maintain a safe speed: Speeding reduces your ability to perceive hazards and increases the time it takes to stop.**

<sup>1</sup>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving](http://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving)

<sup>2</sup>National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2013). Visual-Manual NHTSA Driver Distraction Guidelines for In-Vehicle Electronic Devices (Federal Register Vol.78, No. 81).

## Distracted driving is a primary cause of rear-end collisions, as distractions diminish your ability to perceive and react to a hazard. **Limit visual, manual and cognitive distractions while driving!**



### Visual distractions:

Tasks that require you to look away from the road ahead.

### Manual distractions:

Tasks that require you to take a hand off the steering wheel to manipulate a device or object.

### Cognitive distractions:

Tasks that require you to avert your mental attention away from the task of driving.

**Tasks that require all three are the most hazardous**

### Length of distraction:

Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, or past 4 semi-trucks, with your eyes closed.<sup>1</sup>



Keep glances away from the road ahead to **1.5 seconds or less.**<sup>2</sup> Like when checking mirrors, for example.



**Scanning ahead** is an important process to prevent rear-end collisions. Do not rely on the vehicle's brake lights in front of you to signal a hazard. Scan well beyond the vehicle in front of you.



### Rear-end collisions at intersections:

Watch for vehicles:

- That may try to make a changing light, but brake suddenly when they decide not to
- That begin to move ahead when a light changes, then unexpectedly slows or stops

When stopped at intersections leave a gap between you and the vehicle ahead, at least enough that you can see the bottom of their rear tires.



**Reduce your chance of being rear-ended:** Maintaining a safe following distance also allows you to slow gradually so you are not rear-ended by a distracted or tailgating driver.