



Following Too Close

Rear end collisions are the #1 cause of motor vehicle accidents!

As a driver it is critical for you to know and understand that following too close to the vehicle in front of you is a no-win situation. When traveling at 60 mph you will travel 88 feet per second. In two seconds, you will travel over half the length of a football field. If you look away for two seconds, could you stop if the vehicle in front of you has come to a stop?

Large trucks need additional space between vehicles to allow for safe braking and unexpected actions. In crashes, large trucks most often hit the vehicle in front of them. Drivers should continually scan the road for hazards that could impede the flow of traffic. As conditions change, you must change the speed of the vehicle.

The 4 Second Rule: To prevent rear-end collisions use the 4-second rule. The 4 second rule is the minimum distance you should travel behind the vehicle immediately in front of you. When the vehicle in front of you passes a landmark, such as a sign or a bridge, count one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three, one thousand and four. If you pass the landmark before you finish counting, then you are too close and need to increase your distance from the vehicle in front.

Factors affecting Stopping Distance:

- ▶ **Perception Time** – how long it takes to recognize a situation and understand that you need to stop (about 3/4 of a second). **Perception distance** is how far a vehicle travels during this time.
- ▶ **Reaction Time** – how long it takes to respond to a situation by moving your foot from the accelerator pedal to the brake pedal (about 3/4 of a second). **Reaction distance** is how far a vehicle travels during this time.
- ▶ **Braking Time** – how long it takes a vehicle to stop after the brakes are applied. **Braking distance** is how far the vehicle travels during this time.

Stopping Distance = Perception Time/Distance + Reaction Time/Distance + Braking Time/Distance

You should increase your following distance if:

- ▶ The road is wet/icy
- ▶ The vehicle you're following is small, such as a motorcycle
- ▶ You are driving a larger vehicle or pulling a trailer

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