

Environment aware:

Following distance

Use this guide to help lead a discussion with employees to raise awareness on the important concept of following distance in helping prevent motor vehicle collisions. Use the form on Page 2 to record meeting details.

Following distance is measured by time and not distance. When following a vehicle, we should start counting seconds when the vehicle in front crosses a point in the roadway that will be easy for the driver to observe, like a road sign or marker. The length of time that a driver should be following the vehicle in front of them depends on the size of the vehicle they are driving, the speed in which they are operating and the road conditions in which they are operating on.

1 Maintain safe following distance:

- For a commercial motor vehicle, the general rule is **one second for every ten feet of vehicle length**.
- Tractor-trailers may require **6-7 seconds**, depending on trailer length.
- Despite complaints from drivers, this distance allows for safety and prevents abrupt maneuvers by other vehicles.

2 Adjust for speed and conditions:

- Add an additional second for speeds exceeding **40 MPH**.
- Stopping distance is impacted when speeds are higher and road conditions are poor.
- In severe road conditions, drivers need to add additional seconds. Icy roads, for example, may require almost **doubling the stopping distance**.

3 React to vehicles pulling in between:

- If a vehicle cuts in between you and the vehicle you were following, cover the brake.
- Assess whether the vehicle is accelerating and returning you to safe distance, or slowing down requiring readjustment of your following distance.

4 Dealing with tailgating:

- If someone is tailgating you, extend your following distance to limit the chance of having to stop suddenly.
- Reducing sudden stops helps minimize the risk of being struck in the rear of your vehicle by the tailgator.

5 Preventing collisions if distracted:

- Maintaining following distance helps when driving cues are missed or distractions occur giving drivers a better chance to avoid a rear-end collision.
- Stay attentive to avoid rear-end collisions.

For additional information related to driver safety, visit MyNSightOnline.com/DriveThe5

For further guidance, refer to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration CMV Driving Tips – Following Too Closely (fmcsa.dot.gov/safety/driver-safety/cm-v-driving-tips-following-too-closely).



For assistance with risk management services or safety resources, contact us at RMSolutions@nationwide.com or 1-800-260-1356.

NationwideAgribusiness.com

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Toolbox Talk

Date: ____/____/____

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Discussion notes:
