

The National Transportation Safety Board estimates that a driver will brake about 50,000 times a year to avoid crashing into a vehicle in front of them. Allow yourself room to maneuver or brake by keeping a safety cushion on all sides of the vehicle. Keeping a safe distance between you and other vehicles not only increases your ability to see, but also increases the chances of being seen by other drivers.



## How safe is YOUR driving?

### Add another second... Keep a safe following distance

What is a safe following distance to keep between you and the vehicle in front of you?

Under the best conditions ---during daylight with good, dry roads and low traffic volume-- the minimum safe following distance is 2 seconds, but upgrading to a 4 second or greater distance offers more protection. Keep in mind that when traveling in bad weather or when roadway conditions are poor, additional seconds are always needed to provide the safety cushion that separates you from the vehicles around you.

- ▶ Avoid tailgating; this removes the safety cushion between you and the vehicle in front of you. Tailgating blocks your view of the road ahead and reduces your stopping time significantly. If you find yourself being tailgated, don't hit the brakes, instead slow down gradually and allow the vehicle to pass you.
- ▶ Consider the stopping distance of other vehicles. The more the vehicle weighs, the longer the distance needed to stop. Stopping distance is much longer for a heavy truck than it is for a passenger vehicle. In fact, it takes about twice the distance to stop a heavy truck as it does a passenger vehicle traveling at the same speed.
- ▶ Be aware of adverse weather conditions, in heavy traffic, or at night, add seconds to increase your safety cushion.

#### CRITICAL TIMES TO ADD A SECOND

- ▶ When crowded by a tailgater
- ▶ Driving on unfamiliar, wet, slippery or icy roads
- ▶ Being followed by a motorcycle or large vehicle
- ▶ Pulling a trailer or carrying a heavy load
- ▶ Driving in an area with pedestrian traffic
- ▶ Traveling through road construction zone or other areas with frequent stop and go traffic
- ▶ Traveling near or behind a school bus

Because it is difficult to gauge following distances in feet, a good way to make sure you always keep a safety distance is to use the '2-second rule' to maintain a safety cushion.

