

# SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

## Maintain a Safe Following Distance

As a truck driver, you're often working on a tight schedule. Dealing with congested traffic and fellow drivers can often put you off-schedule or just aggravate you. But these are not good reasons to tailgate or to not keep a safe following distance between vehicles around you. Safety should always be your top priority on the road and that starts with a safe following distance.

### How Close Is Too Close?

Large trucks need extra space between vehicles in order to safely brake. In crashes, large trucks most often hit the vehicle in front of them. When you are following too closely, even if you are driving attentively, you cannot avoid a collision if the vehicle in front of you suddenly brakes.

Maintaining a safe following distance is an easy way to keep yourself and other drivers on the road safe. In addition to giving you more stopping time, which is crucial when you are driving a heavy vehicle, proper following distance allows you more time to make good, well-planned decisions and gives drivers around you the opportunity to see further ahead.

### Counting it Out

If you are driving below 40 mph, you should leave at least one second for every 10 feet of vehicle length. For a typical tractor-trailer, this results in four seconds between you and the leading vehicle. This means that when the vehicle in front of that typical trailer passes a certain landmark (e.g., a signpost or a mile marker), four seconds should pass before the trailer passes that same landmark. When you are driving over 40 mph, add another second. The average stopping distance for a loaded tractor-trailer traveling at 55 mph is 196 feet, compared with 133 feet in a passenger vehicle.

### Bad Weather

The distance needed to safely brake increases dramatically when road conditions change. Weather conditions such as rain, ice and snow can cause slippery roads and reduce visibility. In adverse conditions, adjust your following distance accordingly.

### Stay Alert

Of course, even if you do maintain the correct following distance, it is fundamental that you are physically fit to drive. Even if you have a deadline to meet, be safe. If you feel drowsy or unable to concentrate on the road, pull off and take a break. Your life and the lives of others around you on the road depend on it.