

# TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

Revised 2/15/11 V1.0

## TAILGATING COACHING TOPIC

### The Issue

The act of tailgating can result in a "rear-ender."

A rear-ender is a common type of traffic crash causing vehicle damage and injuries -- particularly to the neck and back of passengers in the vehicle being struck from behind.

### Our Concern

Large vehicles need more time to stop. Under normal conditions cars, vans, and small vehicles should allow at least two seconds following distance between vehicles. Larger vehicles need to start out with at least four seconds following distance between vehicles. Here's why.

A vehicle's stopping distance is simply the distance the vehicle travels before it comes to a full stop. It's a combination of the driver's reaction distance [time] and the vehicle's braking distance. A driver's reaction distance [time] is typically the same ... regardless of what size vehicle they are driving ... (approximately 3/4 of a second). The braking distance depends on the size of the vehicle and the speed at which it is traveling. The bigger the vehicle, the more momentum it carries, and the further it travels trying to stop. The greater the braking distance translates into a need for greater following time required in order to stop.

### STOPPING DISTANCE FORMULA

Reaction distance + braking distance = stopping distance

(At 55 mph it takes approximately 200 feet to stop)

### A Solution

Fortunately, there is much you can do to prevent rear-end motor vehicle collisions. Watch the traffic in front of and behind you so you can avoid sudden stops.

- Keep your vehicle under control at all times.
- Travel at a speed appropriate to the conditions of traffic, road and visibility. Defensive driving is especially important in heavy traffic.
- Increase your following distance, (do not follow too closely). Keep plenty of space between you and the vehicle ahead of you.

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- Anticipate sudden stops, especially at intersections, near pedestrian crossings, rail crossings, shopping centers and areas where vehicles are getting ready to turn or park.
- Stay far enough back in traffic that you can see over or around the vehicle ahead of you.

**DON'T BE A TAIL-GATER**