

# MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT SAFETY BLITZ! TAILGATING

24-28  
OCTOBER, 2022

## WHAT IS TAILGATING?

### LET'S PUT A DEFINITION ON IT.

Tailgating is when a driver follows another vehicle closely, often at a distance that would not allow proper reaction time to avoid a collision should the front driver brake suddenly.

## DON'T BE A STATISTIC.

### YOU CAN'T STOP FAST ENOUGH IF YOU'RE TOO CLOSE.

87% of all commercial motor vehicle crashes are the result of driver behavior or driver error, according to the NHTSA. Rear-end crashes are the most frequently-occurring type of collision, accounting for 29% of all crashes. Tailgating is the leading cause of rear-end collisions, causing more than 1,700 deaths and 500k injuries per year.

## KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.

### IT TAKES LONGER TO STOP. MAINTAIN YOUR DISTANCE.

The FMCSA recommends that tractor-trailer drivers keep a following distance of one second for each 10 feet of vehicle length, with an additional second for speeds over 40 MPH. For example, for a 50ft tractor trailer traveling at 55 MPH, the recommended following distance is at least 6 seconds. The FMCSA also recommends drivers double their following distance when there are adverse driving conditions or inclement weather.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO STOP?

### LET'S GET SOME PHYSICS INVOLVED...

If you are driving 55 MPH on a dry road surface, you are traveling approximately 81 feet per second. On average, it takes humans about 1.75 seconds from the time you see a reason to stop to when your brain tells you to take action. At 55 MPH, that translates to about 142 feet traveled in the time it takes you to react. It takes a loaded tractor-trailer traveling at 55 MPH in ideal conditions on average 196 feet to come to a complete stop.



Don't forget to post your pictures on Facebook! Use #SafetyBlitz2022 and tag ATA Comp Fund or Alliance Interstate Risk for your chance to win prizes!



#SB22 PLAYLIST

# KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. GIVE 'EM SOME ROOM.

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You're not going to get there any quicker by following too closely. In fact, you might not make it there at all. Here are some tips to help drivers remember that tailgating is dangerous.

- Leave more than enough room between you and the vehicle in front of you to react and stop should the vehicle in front have to brake suddenly.
  - In moderate to heavy traffic, avoid following too close by driving 3 – 5 MPH slower than the traffic flow. By driving a little slower, it allows traffic that pulls into the space in front of the truck to automatically pull away, regaining a safe space. Once out of the congestion, the truck can then increase speed to a safe legal limit
  - Drive defensively to keep critical distance between your vehicle and other vehicles around you – in the front, on the sides, and behind you. Treat brake lights as an immediate signal to slow down.
  - Manage your aggression as this often leads to tailgating and increasing the risk of crashing. In some instances, by 10 times. Keep emotions and reactions in check.
  - Utilize technology provided in the truck to identify when following too close. The technology takes the guesswork out of deciding if you are following too close or not. It helps you correct and adapt to quickly changing situations.
- Avoid any and all distractions (phones, radio, food, etc) which could cause unnecessary tailgating.
  - Monitor bunches or clusters of cars and trucks as that leads to frequent lane changes and unintentional (and intentional) tailgating. You may need to slow down to avoid these bunches.
  - Drive at a speed appropriate for all current weather and road conditions. It is often advisable to drive at a slower speed. Consider traffic, school zones, and construction zones causing slower traffic, which can lead to tailgating.
  - Don't maximize your speed when going down a hill to assist with going up another hill at a faster rate of speed. This can lead to tailgating going down the hill or back up the hill.
  - Consider the impact at night a larger commercial vehicle's lights can have when behind a smaller "four-wheeler". Many times, the large trucks lights (especially LED lights) can be blinding in a smaller vehicle's rear view mirror, causing the driver to become anxious or nervous. In turn, the driver may be more likely to drive unpredictably and increase the chances of a crash.

# LESSONS LEARNED. THIS IS REAL LIFE.

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## AUGUST 2020

Driver was tailgating a co-worker in another tractor-trailer when the lead truck slammed on his brakes, causing the second truck to crash into the back of him. The lead truck was then propelled into two additional tractor-trailers, causing both drivers to be injured. The at-fault driver sustained lower back disc tears and cervical spine disc herniations, leading to multiple surgeries and limited future work opportunities.

## MAY 2022

Driver was increasing speed going down a hill, causing his truck to tailgate a slower vehicle. Driver was boxed in and the only way to avoid an accident was to drive onto the shoulder of the road. The shoulder was soft due to recent rain and the truck rolled. The driver required lower back, neck, and shoulder surgeries.

