



ACCIDENT COUNTERMEASURES



The Accident Countermeasures program was created to provide a way for our company and our most important asset, the drivers, to cover important safety topics in a meaningful and accessible manner. This program allows you, the driver, to study safety material and learn desirable information at a time most convenient to you.

Please take the time to read through the material, study the pictures, and then answer the questions at the end of this handout. Your completed answer sheet should then be turned in to receive credit for completing this program.

Speed and Space Management



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Safety Management Services Company's Accident Countermeasures Program

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Speed and Space Management

To be a safe driver, you need space all around your vehicle. When things go wrong, space gives you time to think and to take action. To have space available when something goes wrong, you need to **manage** space. While this is true for all drivers, it is very important for large vehicles. They take up more space and also require more space when stopping and turning.

Space Ahead

Of all the space around your vehicle, it is the area ahead of the vehicle—the space you are driving into—that is most important. You need space ahead in case you must suddenly stop. According to accident reports, the vehicle that trucks most often run into is the one in front of them. The most frequent cause is **following too closely**. Remember, if the vehicle ahead of you is smaller than yours, it can probably stop faster than you can. You may crash if you are following too closely.

One good rule for how much space you should keep in front of you is at least one second for each 10 feet of vehicle length at speeds below 40 mph. At greater speeds, you must add one second for safety. For example, if you are driving a 40-foot vehicle, you should leave four seconds between you and the vehicle ahead. In a 60-foot rig, you will need six seconds. Over 40 mph, you would need five seconds for a 40-foot vehicle and seven seconds for a 60-foot vehicle.





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To know how much space you have, wait until the vehicle ahead passes a shadow on the road, a pavement marking, or some other clear landmark. Then count off the seconds like this: “one thousand-and-one, one thousand-and-two” and so on, until you reach the same spot. Compare your count with the rule of one second for every 10 feet of length. If you are driving a 40-foot truck and only counted up to two seconds, you are too close. Drop back a little and count again until you have four seconds of following distance (or five seconds, if you are going over 40 mph). After a little practice, you will know how far back you should be. Remember to add one second for speeds above 40 mph. Also remember that when the road is slippery, you need **much more space** to stop.

Space Behind

Heavy vehicles are often tailgated when they cannot keep up with the speed of traffic. This often happens when you are going uphill. If a heavy load is slowing you down, stay in the right lane if you can. Going uphill, you should not pass another slow vehicle unless you can quickly and safely get around.

In a large vehicle, it is often difficult to see whether a vehicle is close behind you. You may be tailgated:

- When you are traveling slowly. Drivers trapped behind slow vehicles often follow closely.
- In bad weather. Many car drivers closely follow large vehicles during bad weather, especially when it is hard to see the road ahead.

If you are being tailgated, do the following to reduce the chances of an accident:

- Avoid quick changes. If you have to slow down or turn, signal early and very gradually reduce your speed.
- Increase your following distance. Opening up room in front of you will help you avoid having to make sudden speed or direction changes. It also makes it easier for the tailgater to get around you.
- Do not speed up. It is safer to be tailgated at a low speed than a high speed.





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- Avoid tricks. Do not turn on your taillights or flash your brake lights. Follow the suggestions above.

Space to the Sides

Commercial vehicles are often wide and take up most of a lane. Safe drivers will manage what little space they have by keeping their vehicle centered in the lane and avoiding driving alongside others.

Staying centered in a lane - Keep your vehicle centered in the lane to maintain safe clearance on either side. If your vehicle is wide, you have little room to spare.

Strong winds - Strong winds can make it difficult to stay in your lane. The problem is usually worse for lighter vehicles. This problem can be especially bad coming out of tunnels. Do not drive alongside others if you can avoid it.

Traveling next to others - There are two dangers in traveling alongside other vehicles. Another driver may suddenly change lanes and turn into you. You may be trapped when you need to change lanes. Find an open spot where you are not near other traffic. When traffic is heavy, it may be hard to find an open spot. If you must travel near other vehicles, try to keep as much space as possible between you and them. Also, drop back or pull forward so you are sure the other driver can see you.



Chronicle / Paul Chinn