

SAFETY TRAINING TALK

Date

TOPIC: Maintaining a Safe Space

Yesterday, a driver of a company vehicle was exiting Interstate 75 at Fowler Avenue when the vehicle in front of him stopped short; unfortunately, the driver did not have enough time to respond and rear-ended the other vehicle.

Fortunately, no one was injured in either vehicle, but both vehicles were damaged and the company's driver was cited.

This accident is a prime example of why you should always ensure you are following at an appropriate distance. If the company driver had maintained a safe space between himself and the other vehicle, he might have had an opportunity to stop in time.

By keeping the proper following distance you give yourself room for maneuverability and time to access an escape route should you need one. If you follow too close, your only source of information is the brake lights of the car or truck in front of you.

So what is the appropriate following distance? The following is a very good rule of thumb to use:

Cars	2 seconds
Vans	4 seconds
Trucks & buses	5 seconds

Select an object on the road ahead - a sign, pole, etc. and then when the vehicle in front of you passes it, simply begin counting ..."thousand one, thousand two..." if you get to the appropriate number before the sign you're fine, but if you get to the sign before the number - BACK OFF just a bit. You are following too close.

Keep in mind that the proper following distances should increase under adverse conditions like inclement weather, reduced visibility, deteriorated road conditions, traffic, construction, faulty equipment, and night time driving.

The proper following distance also helps if you have a tailgater on your bumper. If they hit you, they may be "At Fault" but you will still be terribly inconvenienced and possibly even injured. So as soon as you spot a tailgater, increase your following distance from the vehicle in front of you. That way, you'll have more time to stop and/or maneuver in the event of an emergency.

Maintaining a safe space ensures you will get the 'Big Picture', and you'll have more information on which to base your decisions, and more time to react.

Next, take a moment to discuss any specific safety concerns you want everyone to be aware of on your job. End the meeting by having everyone sign the back of this sheet.