



Tailgate Safety Talk

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

Our driving habits are influenced by the way we think when we are behind the wheel. Eighty-five to ninety-five percent of motor vehicle accidents are caused by driver error - your error. To be an accident-free driver you must always be aware of what is happening around you. Drive defensively by thinking and planning ahead. That way you will see trouble before you are involved in it. This will allow you time to avoid the problem.

Here are some tips to help improve your driving skills:

- Keep your vehicle in good repair with regular checkups and servicing.
- Do a circle-of-safety check before you start to drive. Make sure the vehicle is in good condition, windows are free of obstructions such as dirt or ice, the tires are properly inflated and all lights and signals are working properly. Also make sure that there is nothing (and nobody!) you could hit when you start to drive away.
- Drive defensively and always watch out for the other guy.
- Keep your eyes moving at all times and don't stare fixedly at an object. Check your rear view mirror every few seconds.
- Look ahead - at least one city block when driving at city speeds and several city blocks when traveling at highway speeds.
- Follow the two second-rule to allow yourself space to see and react. As the vehicle directly ahead of you passes a stationary object, count to yourself - one thousand and one, one thousand and two. Your vehicle should not pass the same object until you say the word "two". This is the minimum distance that you should place between yourself and another moving vehicle. At night, in the rain or snow, increase your following time to four or more seconds.
- When another driver is tailgating you, don't speed up. Give yourself plenty of space ahead to react. Don't let a bad driver push you into making a mistake.
- Always leave yourself room to maneuver: front, rear and sides. A bicycle rider could shoot out into your path. A person in a parked car could open a door into traffic. The driver beside you on the expressway might not see you as he changes lanes to avoid another automobile or an animal.
- At a four-way stop, try to establish eye contact to communicate your intentions to the other drivers. If you plan to make a turn, ensure your signal is on. If you arrive at a four-way stop simultaneously with another driver, the vehicle on the right generally has the right-of-way. But, if you are in doubt, signal the other driver to make his move first.
- Avoid situations where you will have to back up. Try to park in positions where you will be able to drive forward when you leave.

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.