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## Driving Large Vehicles

# Following Distance

How closely can you follow the vehicle in front of you and still be safe? The answer depends on road, traffic and weather conditions—and on the size of your vehicle.

### Large Vehicles Need More Time To Stop

Ordinary cars on good roads need to allow at least two seconds following time in dry, daytime conditions. The time should be increased at night, in heavy traffic or in bad weather. But large vehicles need to start out with more following time—at least four seconds—even under perfect conditions. Here's why.

### It's a Matter of Momentum

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 and the vehicle's braking distance. While a driver's reaction distance is the same no matter what size the vehicle is, the braking distance depends on the size of the vehicle. The bigger the vehicle, the more momentum

it carries, and the harder it is to stop. The greater stopping distance of a large vehicle translates into a need for greater follow- ing time in which to stop.

Allow at least four seconds following time for any large vehicle under ideal conditions. This includes vehicles towing trail- ers. Add more time if the trailer being towed is more than 20 feet long.

### When the Going Gets Tough

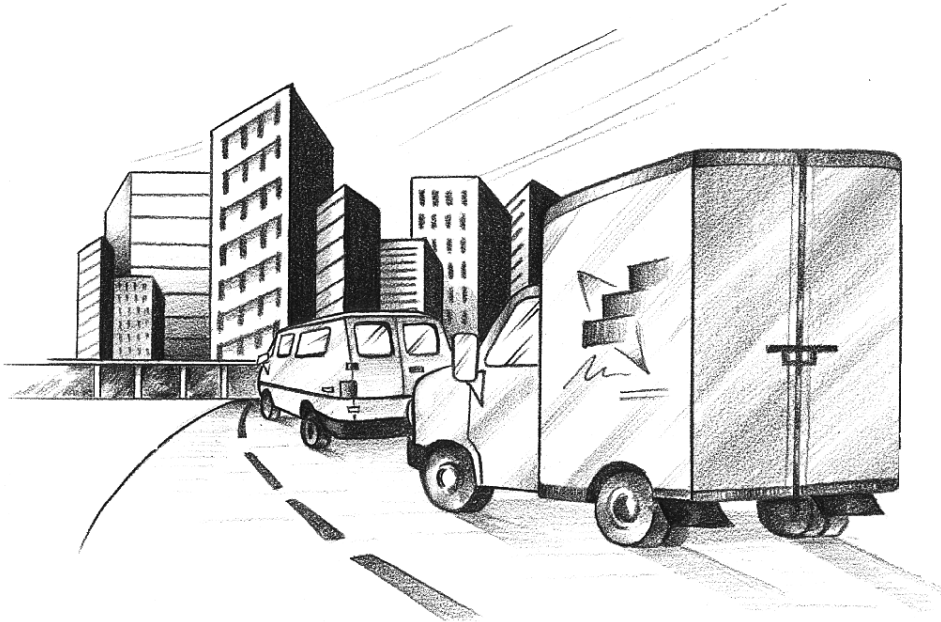
Under adverse conditions, add extra time. Add one second each for such conditions as rain, snow, darkness and heavy traffic. Thus, a safe following time for you at night in the fog may be six seconds or more.

### Safety Takes Practice

Until you get used to driving with an increased following time, check yourself from time to time. Start counting seconds when the vehicle in front of you passes a landmark such as a telephone pole or milepost. How far did you count? Remember, allow at least four seconds under ideal conditions, more if road or weather aren't perfect.



## Following Distance



**SAFETY  
ABOVE ALL**

# Safety Brief

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## Following Distance

This form documents that the training specified above was presented to the listed participants. By signing below, each participant acknowledges receiving this training.

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_ Trainer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Participants:**

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Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_ Trainer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Participants:**

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