

Best Practice Guide

Avoiding Rear-End Collisions



Watch Your Rear

Rear-end collisions are one of the most common types of incident on the road. The main causes of rear-end collisions include drivers following the vehicle in front too closely and inattentiveness. In other words, DRIVER ERROR!

Drivers are most commonly rear-ended at slow speeds - usually at intersections, stoplights, and roundabouts. Rear-end collisions also frequently occur in heavy traffic when vehicles are crawling along or when they slow down suddenly.

Many drivers think there is nothing they can do to prevent being rear-ended by others, but in fact there are many hazard prevention techniques you can employ to try to keep your rear intact.

Beware Of Others

All drivers should follow the three-second rule in order to leave a safe gap between their vehicle and the one in front. If the driver behind you doesn't stick to this rule and is following too closely the safest solutions are to:

- Change lanes if you are traveling on a highway / freeway
- Pull over at a safe place and let the vehicle pass.

DO NOT be bullied into speeding and NEVER slam on your brakes in order to 'teach the other driver a lesson' - this will most likely end in damage to your vehicle, if not injury to yourself or others.

Think Tires And Tarmac

When stopped in traffic you should leave yourself a safety space by keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front. When coming to a stop behind another vehicle make sure you can see its rear tires AND tarmac behind the tires. This leaves you with an escape route to get out of the way if you see a vehicle approaching from behind that doesn't appear to be stopping.



Use Your Mirror

One of the most successful ways of avoiding rear-end collisions is to check your mirror frequently. By keeping an eye on what vehicles behind are doing you can determine whether you are at risk. Use your mirror:

- Every few seconds while driving.
- Before making any maneuvers

- Before braking.
- While stopped.

Stay In Drive

When stopped behind another vehicle you may wish to leave your vehicle in gear / in drive in case you need to make a quick escape from a vehicle approaching from behind. By checking your mirror you should be able to identify any vehicles which look like they may not stop - and by being prepared you may be able to get out of the way in time to avoid a collision.



Light Up

It is a good idea to keep your foot on the brake pedal when stopped so that drivers approaching from behind are more likely to spot you and realize that you are stopped. Sometimes a driver who is not paying attention may think that traffic is still moving so illuminating your brake lights makes it more obvious.

Flash Your Blinkers

Sometimes traffic can slow or stop suddenly on a highway or freeway- usually due to road works or an incident. In this situation you should switch on your blinker lights to warn other drivers that something is not right. If you simply use your brakes other drivers might think you are just slowing slightly - but the use of blinker lights gives a clear signal to other drivers that they need to slow down as quickly as possible.

Test Your Eyes

If you have poor eyesight you have little chance of being able to manage the space around your vehicle and may find it difficult to judge space, both in front and to the rear of your vehicle. Have your eyes tested at least every two years, and more frequently if you suspect your eyesight has deteriorated.



Watch Your Speed

The faster you drive the more likely you are to have to perform sudden braking actions - and this dramatically increases the chances of the vehicle behind failing to brake in time and colliding with the rear of your vehicle. Always obey speed limits and adjust your speed to suit the weather, road and environmental conditions.

Think Smoothly And Steadily

If you accelerate harshly and brake suddenly, the vehicle behind will have less warning when you are coming to a stop - and is more likely to collide with you. If you accelerate and brake smoothly and slowly you will provide the vehicle behind with more time to adjust their speed and come to a stop safely.

Look Well Ahead

Look ahead by 12-15 seconds so that you are aware of what is happening in the distance. By looking ahead you can slow well in advance of a hazard and, in turn, provide the vehicle behind with more time to brake.

- R** Remember to use mirrors regularly.
- E** Ensure others see you by activating brake lights when stopped.
- A** Always abide by the three-second rule.
- R** Remember to use your blinker lights when slowing suddenly.

- E** Ensure you keep an eye on vehicles following too closely.
- N** Never stop too close to the vehicle in front.
- D** Drive at a safe speed.

WARNING

A badly positioned head restraint can increase the likelihood of sustaining a neck injury in a rear-end collision. Generally, the top of the head restraint should be positioned at least as high as the level of your eyes to ensure it will protect your neck in the event of a collision.