

## Following Distance:

When I do a driver improvement course one thing I will ask the driver's is what they feel is the secret to being a collision free driver. The number one answer is to maintain a safe following distance.

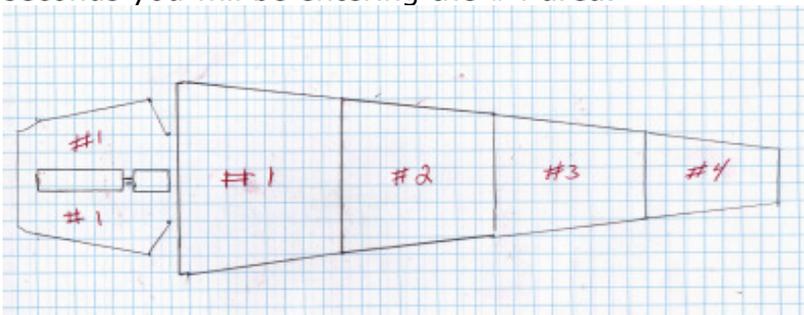
I would agree with that however I do not think that many drivers understand the "How To" part of following distance. The drivers know that you pick a spot and when the vehicle ahead of you passes that spot you start to count one-one thousand, two-one thousand and before the front of your vehicle passes that spot at highway speed you should be at six-one thousand.

Some important things a driver must know.

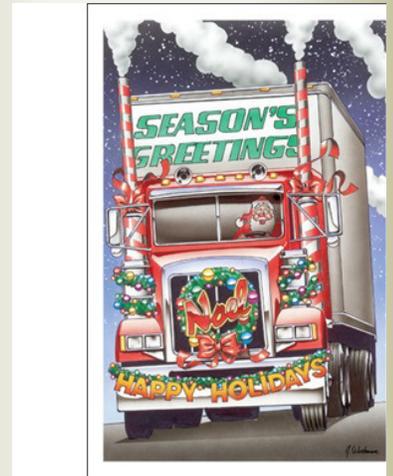
- At 100KPH you are travelling at 90 feet per second. That is just over a tractor trailer length.
- There is reaction time, that is the time it takes for your eyes to see a scenario, then send a message to the brain to tell the foot to get off the accelerator and start to apply the brakes. That can be anywhere from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  seconds. My quick math tells me that is a tractor trailer length to  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  truck lengths.
- Then there is lag time and that is the time that it takes the brake pedal to move the air through the system to the brakes. You are looking at a second for that to happen.

This is all in a perfect world now if you are distracted there is the perception time. Which is a variable that can only be controlled by the driver.

The following is a priority chart to keep in mind to be prepared for unplanned events on the road: #1 is the immediate area around the truck and #4 being an area 500 feet or more ahead. Look ahead and know what is ahead because in  $5 \frac{1}{2}$  seconds you will be entering the #4 area.



**TS&CS is your  
formula for safety  
519+748+4420**



Check out our website  
[www.transportationsafetycs.ca](http://www.transportationsafetycs.ca)  
for past issues on the  
*Safety Lane* as well as  
many other interesting  
articles.

If you have an industry article to  
share please forward it to  
[mike@transportationsafetycs.ca](mailto:mike@transportationsafetycs.ca)

## Distracted Driving:

Specifically when driving you are dealing with 3 types of distraction.

1. External Distractions: This is everything that is happening outside around your vehicle. This includes other drivers, scenery.
2. Internal Distractions: The most common is in cab electronic devices, your lunch/coffee to climate control etc but not limited to.
3. Mental Distractions: This includes but not limited to everything positive and negative going on in our lives. When a driver is out there they have no one to talk to so the mind starts to drift from the task at hand (driving) to what is important in their life. It may start with positive thoughts and positive events in their life, Christmas, birth of a child or grandchild to your next vacation. It can also go to the negative side and be thinking of the stresses in our lives or our families lives.

External Distractions are a challenge to remove as you have to be scanning around in order to see hazards. Limit your time looking or focusing in one area.

Internal Distractions are easier to control. Be organized have your coffee or water within reach. I do not encourage eating while driving however on a long trip keep the healthy snacks handy.

Mental Distractions are a huge challenge and maybe impossible to control. If you find that you are getting distracted mentally stop and safely and securely park, get some fresh air, walk around your truck and do an on route inspection. Being well rested can be a big asset.

**A company cannot "talk its way out of a situation it has behaved its way into."**

## Is your fleet shop a registered MVIS with the MTO?

Recently the MTO has switched vendors for the sign that you are required to have posted outside of your shop. As a result the quality of the signage is not the best and the sign fades.

If that is the case at your shop notify your local MTO office and request a replacement sign.

## Why drivers need to do mirror checks?

Of course we all know that there are far too many blind spots around a truck and a driver must be aware of these blind spots and do mirror checks so smaller vehicles do not get into the blind spots.

In my over 20 years as a driver trainer I wish that I would have kept track of the number of in cab evaluations that I have done. I am sure it is well into a few thousand. In that time I have witnessed many trends of drivers both professional and the non professional that are accidents looking for a place to happen.

In those years I have been involved in numerous collision review committee's and sit on a Collision Review Appeals Committee

One of the common causes of collisions is a lack of mirror checks. Many of the experts in the industry suggest that a driver check mirrors every 6-15 seconds, and I will stress **"when safe to do so"**

I will see drivers driving down the road or highway for 3 to 5 minutes and not take their eye off the road straight ahead. Drivers with this habit do not have a clue what is happening behind them. When driving a commercial Motor Vehicle a driver is restricted in speed therefore most traffic is going to pass them sooner than later. If there is a driver that is behind and is driving erratic chances are that driver will demonstrate that same behavior as they pass placing other drivers in a collision producing situation. By doing mirror checks a driver will recognize that behavior and be more prepared for it when being passed. Also mirror checks are necessary to see and react to emergency vehicles on the road. Trucks are quieter than they were 5 years ago however there are more distractions that can blank out a driver's ability to hear and see that emergency vehicle that is desperately attempting to get to an emergency.

Recently on an in cab evaluation with a driver we traveled from Mississauga to Kitchener on that drive down the 401 west bound that driver did not look at the right mirror once as the truck passed an acceleration ramps. On completion of the evaluation this observation was shared with the driver.

The driver admitted that he has seen other drivers use acceleration ramps as a suicide passing lane or just intimidated by a large vehicle and maybe shoot beyond the end of an acceleration ramp and be forced to cut in front of a large CMV. Having witnessed this driver behaviour a few times a week and maybe daily would it not be the reasonable thing for a defensive driver to do to prevent a collision.

Definitely some food for thought here!

Mike has been a licensed commercial driver for over 43 years. In that time there are years of experiences that he is willing to share with other drivers to assist them in being a safer driver in the classroom or in cab.

Checkout [WWW.transportationsafetycs.ca](http://www.transportationsafetycs.ca)

I was in the process of researching information for an up coming drivers meeting and I knew exactly what I wanted but where do I find it when I realized that I have an article on my website on that very subject.

The long and short of all this is there are some interesting articles on my website. Check out [www.transportationsafetycs.ca](http://www.transportationsafetycs.ca) and go to "articles of interest" A little old news but some very interesting information from some very experienced people in the transportation industry.

**World's Biggest Truck Convoy: (Special Olympics and Law Enforcement Torch Run)**

Back in October I was proud to be part of the Worlds Biggest Truck Convoy in Paris Ontario. No I was not a driver in the convoy as much as I would have loved to I was a volunteer working as an Escort with the responsibility as part of a team to get the trucks in and staged before the convoy. Get the convoy out on Saturday morning and back again after a 2 hour convoy.

2015 was year 11 for this event. In 2014 the amount of money raise exceeded the \$1,000,000.00 mark and in 2015 over \$50,000.00 was added to that amount.

**Medical Reminder**

Drug stores will be closing so the staff can spend the season with family. If you or a family member use prescription medication be sure you have enough to get through the holiday season.

*I don't know of any truck driving jobs that are worth giving your life for.*

*If you put your rig, trailer and load in the ditch, chances are, you'll find yourself standing alone without support from anyone. The finger will be pointed at you.*

*Don't expect anyone to step forward and say they had insisted on a scheduled delivery appointment. 'Just on time' drivers and bad winter weather, just don't mix.*

*Do what you need to, in order to stay safe.*

**Safety ALWAYS RULES.**