

Tool Talk Safety Meeting

June 7, 2021

Maintain a Safe Following Distance

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While it is important to travel in convoy formation it is also important to maintain a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. Trucks require extra stopping distance.

What is a Safe Following Distance?

A safe following distance is the distance between you and the vehicle in front of you that allows for good driving decisions and to slow down or stop when the unexpected happens. Be prepared for the unexpected and always maintain a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Understand Stopping Distance:

Total Stopping Distance = Perception + Reaction + Brake Distance

- Perception is the driver's ability to recognize the hazard.
- Reaction time is the driver's ability to respond and make a driving decision
 - ♦ The average driver takes about 1.5 seconds to perceive the hazard, react and apply the brakes.
- Braking Distance is the distance travelled after the brakes are applied

Example:

A truck towing an SCB at 55 MPH is moving at 80.7 feet per second and requires about 313 feet to stop on dry pavement. A truck towing an SCB traveling at 70 MPH is moving at 102.7 feet per second and requires about 465 feet to stop on dry pavement.

Apply the "seconds rule" to estimate safe following distances when driving large trucks: for speeds under 40 MPH try to keep 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you. For speeds over 40 MPH try to keep 5 seconds separation between vehicles.

Note that the seconds rule is a rule thumb that says you should leave one second for every 10 feet of vehicle. A support truck towing an SCB is between 40' and 50' long. Stopping distances are based on ideal driving conditions on dry pavement. Double your distance in poor conditions.

