



Tailgate Topic #9 - Keep A Space Cushion

In order to have an accident involving you and another vehicle, the two vehicles need to come into contact. It makes sense then, to do whatever is reasonable to reduce the chances of this unfortunate contact. The most obvious way to do this is to keep away from other vehicles! The further away you are from other road users, the less chance that you will have a conflict. Keeping space between yourself and others on the road is called keeping a *SPACE CUSHION*.

The Question for this Meeting:
Where are the places that vehicles get too close together and risk conflict?



Answers could be:

- * At intersections, where everyone is waiting for a light or for their turn at the stop sign;
- * On the highway where tailgaters may follow too close;
- * On multilane roadways, where other vehicles (especially large ones) may drive right beside you;
- * When merging and other vehicles may not allow enough space;
- * Can you think of more????



The safest and most relaxing driving style is to try and drive all by yourself on the road, well away from other drivers. The benefits of this are many. This practise automatically reduces the chance of accidents simply because you are further away from other vehicles but there are many more!

More Space gives you:

- * More time to react and brake or steer if something unexpected happens;
- * Better visibility around the vehicle ahead;
- * More room to manoeuvre and lane change if there is a delay or obstruction in your lane;
- * A smoother ride because you no longer need to brake abruptly;
- * Better fuel economy and reduced vehicle wear because you are now driving more smoothly.

It's easy to adjust your driving style to develop a space cushion, and it doesn't cost you anything... In fact it may save you time because you can plan your moves further in advance to avoid hold-ups.

NOT A SUBSCRIBER YET? You will see a watermarked sample of the video.

Get the 'clean' video for your meeting by visiting the **Thinking Driver** website at www.thinkingdriver.com/thinking_driver_tailgate_topics.php Navigate to bottom of the page to 'Order the professional version of **Tailgate Topics and Tips**' and choose **Download order Form** get the order form and fax/email to Thinking Driver @ kristy.gittens@thinkingdriver.com. We will send you a link to the non-watermarked video.



Tailgate Tips

- On the highway, adjust your speed to minimize the time that you have other vehicles right next to you;
- When all the traffic is moving at the same speed, and is all grouped together, keep the same speed but run that speed outside the pack so that you won't be part of it if there is a crash (*ever hear of chain reaction crashes?*);
- Keep a good following distance ([review Tailgate Tips # 5](#) for more good reasons to keep a good following distance), at least 2 seconds, but 3 or more is better;
- Stop at intersections so that you are far enough back to see the crosswalk if you are car #1 in line and far enough back so that you can see the tires on the car in front of you, where they touch the road (if there is a car in front of you);
- Hesitate for just 1 second when you move off, if you are in a line of cars. This gives you an immediate cushion in front;
- Signal early when changing lanes or merging and wait for someone to give you the space rather than forcing the issue....someone almost always will. Next time return the favour and let someone else in. That is just good defensive tactics, instead of challenging them to force their way in;
- If you are tailgated, add more following distance in front so that you will be able to brake gradually when necessary and reduce the chance of the tailgater running into your rear (sure it's his fault if he does, but do you really need that hassle?).



Practical Challenge:

Today when you are on the road, pay attention to how close you may be to other drivers and use these techniques to build a space cushion. You will see how easy it is to apply this *Thinking Driver Tailgate Tip!*

Printed with permission:

©2012 Thinking Driver



Spencer McDonald is the president and founder of Thinking Driver, a driver training and development company in Surrey, B.C. Spencer's formal education is in psychology and motivation, and has brought these fields together with road safety and education to develop attitude-based driver safety programs.

2601 54 Ave, Surrey, BC V3X 3C1 - Website: www.thinkingdriver.com Email: smcdonald@thinkingdriver.com