

I Need My Space

Space management is simply a method for managing the space around your vehicle. As long as the area around your vehicle is free of obstacles, you're not going to experience any crashes. However, maintaining a safe "bubble" around your vehicle doesn't happen by accident. As an experienced driver, you must develop a space management system which features a well-defined process that you repeat constantly as you drive. You do not suddenly wake up one day possessing these skills. They must be learned, practiced, and refined.

IT'S REQUIRED

Not only is space management good practice, it is required by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations. 49 CFR part 383.111 requires that all CMV operators have the following knowledge on procedures and techniques for controlling the space around their vehicle: (i) The importance of space management; (ii) Space cushions, e.g., controlling space ahead/to the rear; (iii) Space to the sides; and (iv) Space for traffic gaps.

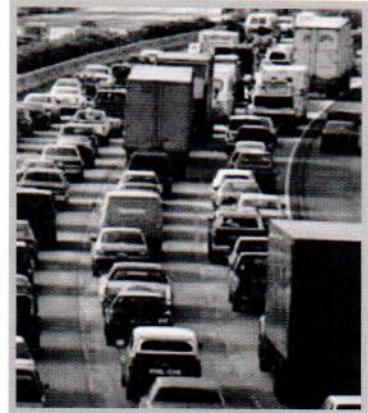
TRACKING TRAFFIC

To successfully manage the space surrounding your vehicle, you as a professional driver must practice good traffic tracking habits. These habits involve continuously searching your surroundings, evaluating the changing driving environment, and executing necessary changes to speed, lane position, and communication.

Speed - Speed is your best friend when it comes to driving safely. Don't kid yourself into thinking you will save time by going faster. Pushing speed can actually cause drivers to lose time. Driving 70 mph instead of 50 mph can increase your operating costs by as much as 70 to 80%. By controlling your speed, you can control the space between your vehicle and other vehicles or obstacles. If there is an obstacle in your path, a change in speed should be your first response. But don't forget that your vehicle will respond differently depending on the conditions of the road and the condition of your tires.

Lane Position Adjustments - Changing your position within the lane is a great way to avoid driving conflicts.

Most of these lane position changes will be minor. For example, moving from the center of the lane to the left side of the lane to avoid a small pothole on the right side of the road. It is also good practice to stay in the right lane whenever practical.



Communication - Ensuring that you can see other drivers and that they can see you can drastically reduce the chance of an accident. A driver's main communication devices are: turn signals, hazard lights, the horn and headlights. By appropriately using these communication devices you make it easier for other drivers to see you and you to see other drivers.

MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE

According to the National Safety Council, under good conditions, the rule of thumb for calculating the ideal following distance for large commercial vehicles is to maintain one-second following distance for each ten feet of vehicle length plus one second for speeds over 40 mph. For example, the driver of a 60-foot tractor-trailer traveling 55 mph should maintain a seven-second following distance $[(60 \text{ feet}/10) + 1 \text{ second at speeds over } 40 \text{ mph} = 7 \text{ seconds}]$. To determine whether you are maintaining a safe following distance, select a fixed object, such as a telephone pole, by the side of the road. When the vehicle ahead of you passes the pole, begin counting the number of seconds that elapse before you pass the pole. The number of seconds you count should be equal to or greater than the safe following distance recommended for your vehicle and speed. Following distance should be increased accordingly during inclement road or weather conditions.

The safest place when driving is the place with the fewest vehicles. Keep as much space between you and the surrounding vehicles as possible. Other drivers might not always do the right thing. You as a trained professional driver must attempt to determine what other drivers are going to do and to leave space to escape if a dangerous situation arises.

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The Shield
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Quiz



Driver Name: _____ Date: _____
Please Print

Driver Signature: _____

Please circle one correct answer for each question.

1. As long as the area around your vehicle is _____, you're not going to experience any crashes.
 - a. not crowded
 - b. dry
 - c. free of obstacles
 - d. all of the above
2. If there is an obstacle in your path, _____ in speed should be your first response.
 - a. an increase
 - b. a change
 - c. a decrease
 - d. none of the above
3. The safest place when driving is the place with the most vehicles.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Which of the following is not one of a driver's main communication devices?
 - a. hazard lights
 - b. turn signals
 - c. head lights
 - d. none of the above
5. The ideal following distance for large commercial vehicles is to maintain one-second following distance for each _____ feet of vehicle length plus one second for speeds over 40 mph.
 - a. ten
 - b. twenty
 - c. two
 - d. none of the above

