

AT-RISK BEHAVIORS BEHIND THE WHEEL



TAILGATING

RECENT TRANSPORTATION DATA

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, rear-end collisions make up roughly one-third of all traffic crashes involving more than one passenger vehicle every year.

AT-RISK BEHAVIORS WHEN DRIVING

Following too close behind the vehicle in front of you is often referred to as tailgating. This at-risk driving behavior can be extremely dangerous, especially at high speeds. Braking quickly and having a fast reaction to the car in front of you requires a safe distance of at least two car lengths. If you are tailgating and the vehicle in front has an unexpected motion, your reaction time is limited.

Tailgating is often referred to as a form of road rage. Driving close to the bumper of a car is usually a driver's strategy for getting the attention of the other driver, bullying the driver to move over or increase their speed. This is an at-risk behavior because the driver being followed can experience anger and react negatively to the tailgating driver.

Some spinal cord injuries, like fracture or compression of the vertebrae, can result from tailgating due to the force of a rear-end collision.

SAFE DRIVING STRATEGIES

- Avoid changing lanes too closely to other vehicles. If you need to make a quick lane change, use your turn signal and wave to the other driver to show your appreciation.
 - To avoid getting too close when changing lanes, leave at least two car lengths between you and the car in front of you.
 - If others get too close behind you, remain calm and continue to stay a safe distance away from the vehicle in front of you.
 - If a car cuts you off, relax and remove your foot from the gas to create two car lengths of space in front of you.
- Keep in mind that the left lane is used for passing. To avoid being tailgated and inducing road rage, drive in the right lane and only use the left lane for passing.
 - In some instances, passing a car you deem as a risk might cause you to speed up. Perform this behavior carefully and safely. If the car you are passing speeds up, don't try to match their speed — simply move back into the right lane.
 - If you can't move over, maintain the posted speed limit and leave a safe distance between you and the vehicles in front of you.
- When stopping, do not get too close to the car in front of you. Always maintain a visual of the bumper and tires of the car in front of you, as well as some of the road. This will leave you with a cushion of safety and the ability to move your vehicle into the left or right lane if necessary, and avoid being boxed in.

