



A **positive** approach to safe driving that enables you to translate the information you see, hear, and feel while driving into informed, decisive **actions**.

## Plan An Escape Route

If there is a Decision Driving™ tactic that really separates the good from the average driver, it is planning an escape route. The easiest way to ensure that you always have an escape route is to maintain a safe following distance. It gives you the time and distance needed to come to a complete stop or safely maneuver around a hazard.

The Timed Interval Rule will help you determine the correct following distance under normal road and weather conditions. The rule is to allow one second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length (round up to the next number if your vehicle length is not an even multiple of ten).

Let's say you're pulling a 45-foot trailer resulting in a vehicle 60 ft. long. Under normal conditions, you should allow at least six seconds of following time between you and the vehicle ahead. In other words, the interval between the time the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a fixed point, and the time the front of your vehicle reaches that same point, should be at least six seconds. In bad weather or poor driving conditions, you'll need to double or triple your following distance.

An escape route is also important when you are stopped in traffic. Always stop where you can still see the point at which the left rear tire of the vehicle ahead touches the road. Without this decision space, the other vehicle might roll back and strike your vehicle, or you will be unable to get around it without backing up.

The most frequent cause of head-on collisions is improper passing. Before attempting to pass,

you should ask yourself three questions. If the answer to any of them is no, *do not pass*.

1. Is there a long-term advantage for me in passing?
2. Do I have enough power to pass quickly and safely?
3. Is there space available for me to pass and return to the proper lane safely?

The third question is where you consider your escape path. Without sufficient space you could find yourself trapped in the wrong lane – and facing a head-on collision.

### As a Decision Driver, you...

...never let your own safety depend entirely on other drivers.

...plan an escape route that leaves you an “out” if other drivers make mistakes.

...know that an ideal escape route provides an adequate amount of clear decision space all around your vehicle.

...develop a good escape route by studying the surrounding traffic patterns and using visibility, time, and space to your advantage.

...have time and room to take decisive action – speeding up, slowing down, or moving to either side.



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