

Safe Driving



DECISION DRIVING®: PLAN AN ESCAPE ROUTE

The Decision Driving® principle that really separates the good driver from the average driver is the ability to plan an escape route. Planning an escape route simply means not allowing yourself to get in a situation where you cannot avoid a crash. A decision driver continually monitors the driving environment and plans ahead to have an escape route.

The easiest way to ensure that you always have an escape route is to maintain a safe following distance behind the vehicle in front of you. This gives you the time and distance needed to either come to a complete stop or steer around a hazardous traffic situation.

To ensure you always have the correct following distance,

follow the Timed Interval Rule, which allows at least one second of following distance for every 10 feet of your vehicle length. For example:

- If you're driving a passenger car, it is considered a minimum of 20 feet long. Therefore, you should maintain a minimum of two seconds of following distance behind the vehicle in front of you.
- If you're driving a straight truck that is 30 feet long, you will need at least three seconds of following distance.

Remember this is for driving under ideal conditions. If you're in poor driving conditions due to inclement weather, darkness or other road conditions, you should double

or triple your following distance.

As a decision driver you should:

- Never let your own safety depend entirely on other drivers
- Leave yourself an out by planning an escape route
- Develop a good escape route by studying the traffic pattern and using it to your advantage
- Remember that an ideal escape route requires clear space all around your vehicle

By ensuring adequate following distance and escape space around your vehicle, you can avoid those crash-producing traffic situations. This will help you arrive at your destination safely and on time.

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