

safety matters

Transport & Warehousing

Toolbox Talks

From your safety partners at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd**

Safe Braking Distances for HGVs

As a lorry driver, you are often working on a tight schedule. Dealing with congested traffic and fellow drivers can make you late and aggravated. But no matter what driving challenges you face, you should always keep a safe distance from other vehicles in order to prevent tailgating. Safety should always be your top priority on the road, and that starts with a safe following distance.

How close is too close?

HGVs need extra space between vehicles in order to safely brake. In crashes, lorries most often hit the vehicle in front of them. When you are following too closely, even if you are driving attentively, you cannot avoid a collision if the vehicle in front of you suddenly brakes.

Maintaining a safe following distance is an easy way to keep yourself and other drivers on the road safe. In addition to giving you more stopping time—which is crucial when you are driving an HGV—proper following distance allows more time for you to make good, well-planned decisions, and it gives drivers around you the opportunity to see further ahead.

Counting it out

If you are driving below 40 mph (64 km/h), you should leave at least one second for every 3 metres of your vehicle's length. For a typical HGV, this results in 4 seconds between you and the leading vehicle. This means

that when the vehicle in front of an HGV passes a certain landmark, such as a driver location sign, 4 seconds should pass before the HGV passes that same landmark. When you are driving over 40 mph, add another second. The average stopping distance for a loaded HGV travelling at 60 mph (96km/h) is 60 metres, compared to 40 metres in a passenger vehicle.

Bad weather

The distance needed to safely brake increases dramatically when road conditions change. Weather conditions such as rain, ice and snow can cause slippery roads and reduce visibility. In adverse conditions, adjust your following distance accordingly.

Stay alert

Even if you do maintain the correct following distance, it is fundamental that you are physically fit to drive. Even if you have a deadline to meet, be safe. If you feel drowsy or unable to concentrate on the road, pull off and take a break. Your life and the lives of others around you on the road depend on it.

Let us know

If you have any concerns about safety on the road, let your supervisor know. Your safety is paramount.

When driving below 40 mph (64 km/h), leave at least one second for every 3 metres of your vehicle's length. For the average HGV, this is 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front.



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