



DRIVING SAFELY MANAGING SPACE

Central Territory
Disaster Services

Developed by: Bill Shillington

MANAGING SPACE

To be a safe driver, you need space all around your vehicle. When things go wrong, space gives you time to think and to take action.

To have space available when something goes wrong, you need to **manage** space. While this is true for all drivers, it is very important for large vehicles. They take up more space and require more space for stopping and turning.

MANAGING SPACE Space Ahead

Of all the space around your vehicle, it is the area ahead of the vehicle –the space you’re driving into –that is most important.

MANAGING SPACE Space Ahead

- **The Need for Space Ahead:**

- You need space ahead in case you must suddenly stop. According to accident reports, the vehicle that trucks and busses most often run into is the one in front of them. The most frequent cause is **following too closely**. Remember, if the vehicle ahead of you is smaller than yours, it can probably stop faster than you can. You may crash if you are following too closely.

MANAGING SPACE Space Ahead

- **How Much Space?**

- How much space should you keep in front of you? One good rule says you need at least one second for each 10 feet of vehicle length at speeds below 40 mph.. At greater speeds, you must add one second for safety. For example, if you are driving a 40 foot vehicle, you should leave 4 seconds between you and the vehicle ahead. In a 60-foot rig, you’ll need 6 seconds. Over 40 mph, you’d need 5 seconds for a 40-foot vehicle and 7 seconds for a 60-foot vehicle.

MANAGING SPACE Space Ahead

- **How Much Space? (cont.)**

- To know how much space you have, wait until the vehicle ahead passes a shadow on the road, a pavement marking, or some other clear landmark. Then count off the seconds like this: “one thousand-and-one, one thousand-and-two” and so on, until you reach the same spot. Compare your count with the rule of one second for every 10 feet of length.

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Space Ahead

- **How Much Space? (cont.)**

- If you are driving a 40-foot truck and only count up to 2 seconds, you're too close. Drop back a little and count again until you have 4 seconds of following distance (or 5 seconds, if you're going over 40 mph). After a little practice, you will know how far back you should be. Remember to add one second for speeds above 40 mph. Also remember that when the road is slippery, you need **much more space** to stop.

MANAGING SPACE

Space Behind

You can't stop others from following you too closely, but there are things you can do to make it safer:

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Space Behind

- **Stay to the Right.**
- Heavy vehicles are often tailgated when they can't keep up with the speed of traffic. This often happens when you're going uphill. If a heavy load is slowing you down, stay in the right lane if you can. Going uphill, you should not pass another slow vehicle unless you can get around quickly and safely.

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Space Behind

- **Dealing with Tailgaters Safely.**
- In a large vehicle, it's often hard to see whether a vehicle is close behind you. You may be tailgated:
 - When you are traveling slowly. Drivers trapped behind slow vehicles often follow closely.
 - In bad weather. Many car drivers follow large vehicles closely during bad weather, especially when it is hard to see the road ahead.

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Space Behind

- **Dealing with Tailgaters Safely. (cont.)**
- If you find yourself being tailgated, here are some things you can do to reduce the chance of a crash:
 - Avoid quick changes. If you have to slow down or turn, signal early and reduce speed very gradually.

MANAGING SPACE

Space Behind

- Increase your following distance. Opening up room in front of you will help you avoid having to make sudden speed or direction changes. It also makes it easier for tailgaters to get around you.
- Don't speed up. It's safer to be tailgated at a low speed than a high speed.
- Avoid tricks. Don't turn or your taillights of flash your brake lights. Follow the suggestions above.

MANAGING SPACE

Space to the Sides

Commercial vehicles are often wide and take up most of a lane. Safe drivers will manage what little space they have. You can do this by keeping your vehicle centered in your lane, and avoid driving along side others.

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Space to the Sides

- **Staying Centered in a Lane.**
- You need to keep your vehicle centered in the lane to keep safe clearance on either side. If your vehicle is wide, you have little room to spare.

MANAGING SPACE

Space to the Sides

- **Traveling Next to Others.**
- There are two dangers in traveling alongside other vehicles:
 - Another driver may change lanes suddenly and turn into you.
 - You may be trapped when you need to change lanes.

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Space to the Sides

- **Traveling Next to Others. (cont.)**
- Find an open spot where you aren't near other traffic. When traffic is heavy, it may be hard to find an open spot. If you must travel near other vehicles, try to keep as much space as possible between you and them. Also, drop back or pull forward so that you are sure the other driver can see you.

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Space to the Sides

- **Strong Winds.**
- Strong winds make it difficult to stay in your lane. The problem is usually worse for lighter vehicles. This problem can be especially bad coming out of tunnels. Don't drive alongside others if you can avoid it.

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Space Overhead

Hitting overhead objects is a danger. Make sure you always have overhead clearance.

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Space Overhead

- Don't assume that the heights posted at bridges and overpasses are correct. Repaving or packed snow may have reduced the clearances since the heights were posted.
- The weight of a cargo van changes its height. An empty van is higher than a loaded one. That you got under a bridge when you were loaded does not mean that you can do it when you are empty.

MANAGING SPACE

Space Overhead

- If you doubt you have safe space to pass under an object, go slowly. If you aren't sure you can make it, take another route. Warnings are often posted on low bridges or underpasses, but sometimes they are not.
- Some roads can cause a vehicle to tilt. There can be a problem clearing objects along the edge of the road, such as signs or trees or bridge supports. Where this is a problem, drive a little closer to the center of the road.

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Space Overhead

- Before you back into an area, get out and check for overhanging objects such as trees, branches or electrical wires. It's easy to miss seeing them while you are backing. (Also check for other hazards at the same time.)

MANAGING SPACE

Space Below

Many drivers forget about the space under their vehicles. That space can be very small when a vehicle is heavily loaded. Railroad tracks can stick up several inches. This is often a problem on dirt roads and in unpaved yards where the surface around the tracks can wear away. Don't take a chance on getting hung up halfway across. Drainage channels across roads can cause the end of some vehicles to drag. Cross such depressions carefully.

MANAGING SPACE

Space for Turns

The space around a truck or bus is important in turns. Because of wide turning and off tracking, large vehicles can hit other vehicles or objects during turns.

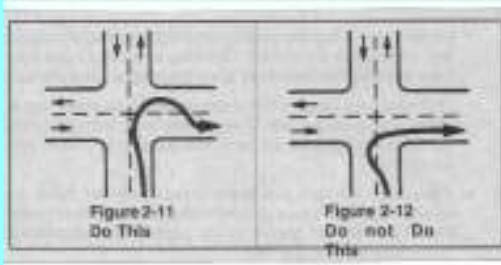
MANAGING SPACE

Space for Turns

- **Right Turns.**
- Here are some rules to help prevent right-turn crashes:
 - Turn slowly to give yourself and others more time to avoid problems.
 - If you are driving a truck or bus that cannot make a right turn without swinging into another lane, turn **wide** as you **complete** the turn, as shown in Figure 2-11. **Keep the rear** of your vehicle close to the curb. This will stop other drivers from passing you on the right.

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Space for Turns



MANAGING SPACE

Space for Turns

- **Right Turns. (cont.)**
 - Don't turn wide to the left as you start the turn, as shown in Figure 2-12. A following driver may think you are turning left and try to pass you on the right. You may crash into the other vehicle as you complete your turn.
 - If you must cross into the oncoming lane to make a turn, watch out for vehicles coming towards you. Give them room to go by or to stop. **However**, don't back up for them, because you might hit someone behind you.

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Space for Turns

- **Left Turns.**
- On a left turn, make sure you have reached the center of the intersection before you start the left turn. If you turn too soon, the left side of your vehicle may hit another vehicle because of offtracking.

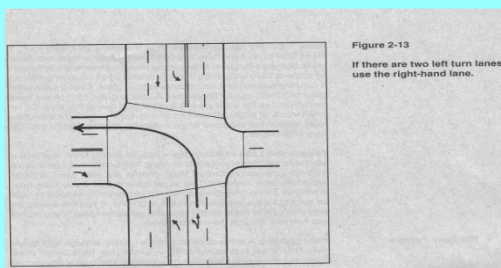
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Space for Turns

- **Left Turns. (Cont.)**
- If there are two turning lanes, always take the right-hand turn lane, as shown in Figure 2-13. Don't start in the inside lane because you may have to swing right to make the turn. Drivers on your left can be more readily seen.

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Space for Turns



MANAGING SPACE

Space needed to Cross or Enter Traffic

- Be aware of the size and weight of your vehicle when you cross or enter traffic. Here are some important things to keep in mind:
 - Because of slow acceleration and the space large vehicles require, you may need a much larger gap to enter traffic than you would in a car.
 - Acceleration varies with the load. Allow more room if your vehicle is heavily loaded.
 - Before you start across a road, make sure you can get all the way across before traffic reaches you.

MANAGING SPACE

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. How do you find out how many seconds of following distance space you have?
2. If you are driving a 30 foot vehicle at 55m.p.h., how many seconds of following distance should you allow?
3. You should decrease your following distance if somebody is following too closely. True or False?
4. If you swing wide to the left before turning right, another driver may try to pass you on the right. True or False?