



VITALS

For Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Tailgating (Following Too Closely)... Extreme Danger

A search reveals that tailgaters are about evenly split between men and women, more for sports car and SUV drivers, a little less often for mini-van drivers and less as we get older. Lots of other variations, but let's face it, it's happening TOO much. If tailgating isn't the most dangerous driving behavior, it's certainly among the worst because, all too often, it's done at high speeds. We can all think of reasons why people tailgate, but for anyone who DOES tailgate, it's probably sufficient to think of your own reasons for tailgating. Most importantly though is to understand how many different types of accidents it can cause and just how dangerous it really is to follow another vehicle too closely.

While tailgating at a speed of 65 or 70MPH (100+ Feet per Second) a driver doesn't have time to "perceive" a problem, much less hit the brakes and attempt to stop. As so often happens, the vehicle ahead of the tailgater will apply their brakes before the tailgater knows what's happening. To understand the danger, do a little searching on the web for photos. Meanwhile, you can avoid being involved in an extremely violent crash simply by not participating in the practice yourself and by avoiding the line of tailgaters in heavy traffic. If someone is tailgating you, make it easy for them to pass, stay in the right lane and very gradually slow down. The tailgater will normally pass you. Please review "Avoiding Rear End Collisions" in "Arrive Alive Do No Harm", THOMCO'S internet safety training program. If your service is not enrolled in "Arrive Alive", contact Mike Szczygiel at meszczygiel@thomcoins.com or 888-969-8033

Reasons NOT to Tailgate

- Tailgating does NOT save time
- Tailgating does NOT save fuel
- Tailgating makes your company and the entire medical transportation industry look bad
- You can keep a good space in front of you, even in heavy traffic, by dropping off the pace one or two MPH
- If you tailgate another vehicle, you can't see a thing in front of you except his back doors
- If it's a car you're tailgating and you both brake at the same time, you will still hit the car because he can stop in a much shorter distance
- Tailgating is even more dangerous on slippery roads and in poor visibility
- When you are tailgating, it is harder for traffic to pass you
- Tailgating can influence the behavior of the driver in front. He may become angry and brake to "teach you a lesson"
- Tailgating makes driving more stressful and fatiguing
- Tailgating is against the law
- It is unprofessional to tailgate. If the public can't trust you to drive safely, how can it trust you to provide care?
- Tailgating removes your ability to control events around you. Instead of acting, you are reacting. Tailgating can easily put you in a position where you could hurt or kill someone. You have nothing to gain by tailgating, but you have everything to lose
- If you are tailgating and the driver in front of you brakes, and you can't swerve left or right because of traffic -if you don't have enough room in front of you to stop—
Just what exactly is your plan?



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