

# superior driving techniques



avoiding a rear  
end collision

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Lumley Insurance claims statistics show rear end collisions account for between 25 and 30 per cent of all collisions yet the rear end collision is probably is the most avoidable of all.

## Stopping distances

An average car, operating in good conditions, requires the following distances to stop:

Speed (km/h)	Stopping distance (m)
30	12
45	21
60	34
75	49
90	67

If conditions are below average - for example rain, snow or loose gravel surface - the required stopping distance will increase.

## The three second rule

When driving behind a vehicle, always adhere to the three second rule. The three second rule stipulates that three seconds must pass between the time the vehicle in front passes a stationary object to when the vehicle behind passes the same object. This allows for an extra three seconds of braking time, should it be needed.

For example, when the first vehicle passes a particular telegraph pole, those in the second vehicle should be able to count "1001. 1002. 1003" before their vehicle reaches that pole. If the vehicle reaches the point prior to 1003, the speed of the following car should be adjusted accordingly.

If driving at night, in adverse conditions or if driving a commercial vehicle, this distance should be increased to four seconds.

## Be aware of what's going on behind

A driver should glance in their rear-vision mirror every five to 10 seconds. That way, they will be aware of what is happening behind their vehicle in case they have to stop suddenly.

## What if the vehicle behind is travelling too close

If a vehicle is not following the three second rule, the vehicle in front should not increase its speed, above the speed limit, to gain the three second distance. Instead, it should gradually slow down and move over to the left hand lane. This will allow the other vehicle to overtake at the first safe opportunity.

## Anticipate what is going to happen

Drivers should be aware of the traffic flow at least three vehicles ahead. This enables them to anticipate what may happen and react accordingly.

## When stopped at an intersection

When stopped at an intersection or traffic jam, a vehicle should remain at least two metres behind the one in front. That way, it is possible to move forward if the vehicle travelling behind is not able to stop in time. Remaining two metres behind could also prevent a vehicle being pushed into the car in front should that vehicle have been hit from behind.

## When recommencing a journey

When traffic flow recommences after stopping, a driver should allow three seconds after the vehicle in front starts to move before recommencing their journey.

## Ensure brakes are maintained

Both the hand and footbrake of a vehicle should undergo safety checks regularly.

A faulty brake might mean the difference of a vehicle being able to stop in time.

## ABS brakes

While ABS brakes are a great safety device they do not necessarily stop a vehicle quicker in emergency braking. A driver whose vehicle has ABS brakes should still follow the rules outlined above.

Following these procedures will not guarantee the avoidance of a rear end collision, however the risk of having this type of collision will be reduced.

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