



# Tailgating

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is tailgating?**

Following too closely behind another motorist, or tailgating, is an aggressive driving behavior.

### **What is the Stop Tailgating project?**

The Stop Tailgating pilot project is a series of DOTS (circular pavement markings) and informational signs along a section of Highway 55 between Buffalo and Rockford to help motorists identify and maintain safe following distances.

### **What does this project hope to accomplish?**

It is the intent of the project to educate motorists on how to identify and maintain safe minimum following distances, with the hope that they will apply the same learned behavior on other roadways making Minnesota roads safer.

### **Where is the project located and why was it chosen?**

The project runs on a 2-mile section of State Highway 55 between Rockford and Buffalo. The site was chosen based on criteria of uninterrupted traffic flow, high crash rate, and community support of other safe driving projects. Nearly 80% of the crashes at intersections along Highway 55 in Wright County are rear-end collisions.

### **Why is tailgating a problem?**

Following too closely, or tailgating, is a common poor driving behavior that is very dangerous and irritating to other drivers. In 2005, rear-end collisions accounted for 28.27% of the vehicle crashes and over 4.35% of the fatal traffic crashes in Minnesota. 23 people died in rear-end crashes in Minnesota during 2005.

### **What is the recommended safe following distance while driving?**

The Minnesota Driver's Manual recommends a minimum 3-second following distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you. This rule applies to passenger cars and light trucks traveling in ideal conditions. When conditions are less than ideal, you must increase the amount of distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you.

### **How do the DOTS work?**

The DOTS are spaced for the simplest and safest use by motorists. When traveling at the posted 55 MPH, under ideal road conditions, a driver should allow two DOTS to be visible between them and the vehicle they are following. This space reflects the recommended three-second following distance at this speed. The project hopes to show people the appropriate visual spacing required to safely follow vehicles on other roadways beyond the project area.

### **How do you find proper following distances when you are not on the project roadway?**

The 3-second following distance works on all roads. When the back-end of a vehicle ahead of you passes a stationary object such as a sign along the road, count how long it takes you to pass the same object – “one-Minnesota, two-Minnesota, three-Minnesota”. Under ideal road conditions there should be a minimum 3-second count to pass the same object.

### **What can drivers do to protect themselves from tailgaters?**

First of all be aware of not tailgating others. Often we can find ourselves in this situation when we are in a hurry, when roads are congested, and when we are not paying attention to driving. If the driver behind you is following too closely, slow down slightly and allow them to pass.

### **Who are partners in the project?**

Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Safe Communities of Wright County  
Wright County Highway Department

### **What Minnesota laws relate to tailgating?**

According to Minnesota law, drivers who tailgate may be cited, whether or not a rear-end collision occurs, for following vehicles too closely.

*169.18 Subd. 8*

*Following vehicle too closely. (a) The driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, having due regard for the speed of such vehicles and the traffic upon and the conditions of the highway.*

When tailgating, and if “conditions” warrant, an officer may cite a driver for reckless or careless driving.

*169.13 Reckless or careless driving.*

*Subdivision 1. Reckless driving. Any person who drives any vehicle in such a manner as to indicate either a willful or a wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property is guilty of reckless driving and such reckless driving is a misdemeanor.*

*Subd. 2. Careless driving. Any person who operates or halts any vehicle upon any street or highway carelessly or heedlessly in disregard of the rights of others, or in a manner that endangers or is likely to endanger any property or any person, including the driver or passengers of the vehicle, is guilty of a misdemeanor.*

**For more information visit**

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/tailgating>