SMART DRIVER®

March 2024

UNDERSTAND PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Maintaining a proper following distance behind the vehicle ahead can be a challenge in traffic, but seasoned drivers tell us it is not impossible. The goal is to leave yourself enough room to stop your truck in time to avoid causing a rear-end crash. Read the information below and ask yourself how you can improve your driving.

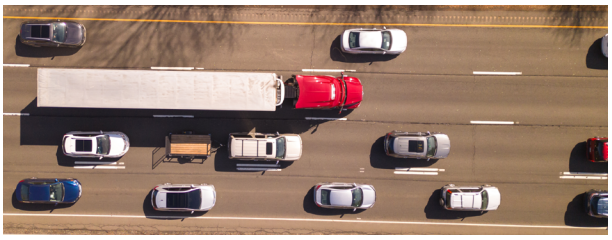
WHAT IS THE PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE?

To calculate how much following distance you need, you must first know how much distance your truck needs to be able to stop.
Four factors that affect stopping distance are:

- Perception time – Time it takes to perceive the need to stop (approx. 1.5 seconds).
- Reaction time – Time it takes to press your foot on the brake pedal (approx. 1 second).
- Brake lag – Time it takes for the brakes to engage (approx. 0.75 seconds).
- Braking distance – Time it takes for the vehicle to stop (approx. 3.4 seconds).

At 105 kph, a tractor-trailer is moving at nearly 100 feet per second (fps). The chart shows how to calculate your truck's stopping distance at 105 kph in ideal conditions.

CALCULATING STOPPING DISTANCE					
	SECONDS		RATE		TOTAL FPS
Perception Time	1.5	x	100	=	150
Reaction Time	1.0		100		100
Brake Lag	0.75		100		75
Braking Distance	3.4		100		340
TOTAL STOPPING DISTANCE = 665 ft					



CRASH PREVENTION TIPS

COUNT SECONDS

Count the number of seconds you are behind the vehicle directly ahead of you to determine if you have proper following distance. When the vehicle directly in front of you passes a stationary object, like a tree or road sign, start counting one-one thousand, two-one thousand, etc., until you pass the stationary object. Based on the chart above, at 105 kph you should be at least six second behind the vehicle in front of you. If you are closer than six seconds, slow down to establish the proper following distance. If other hazards are present, like rain, snow, etc., add at least one second more for each hazard.

SLOW DOWN

Try to drive 3-5 kph below the flow of traffic, not to exceed the posted speed limit. This practice allows faster vehicles to naturally pull away from you and reduces the mount of braking and accelerating you have to do.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Do not let distractions inside or outside the cab lessen your perception and reaction times. Stay focused on the task of driving.

OBSERVE PROPER SPEED FOR CONDITIONS

When road conditions are slippery, reduce your speed and increase following distance.

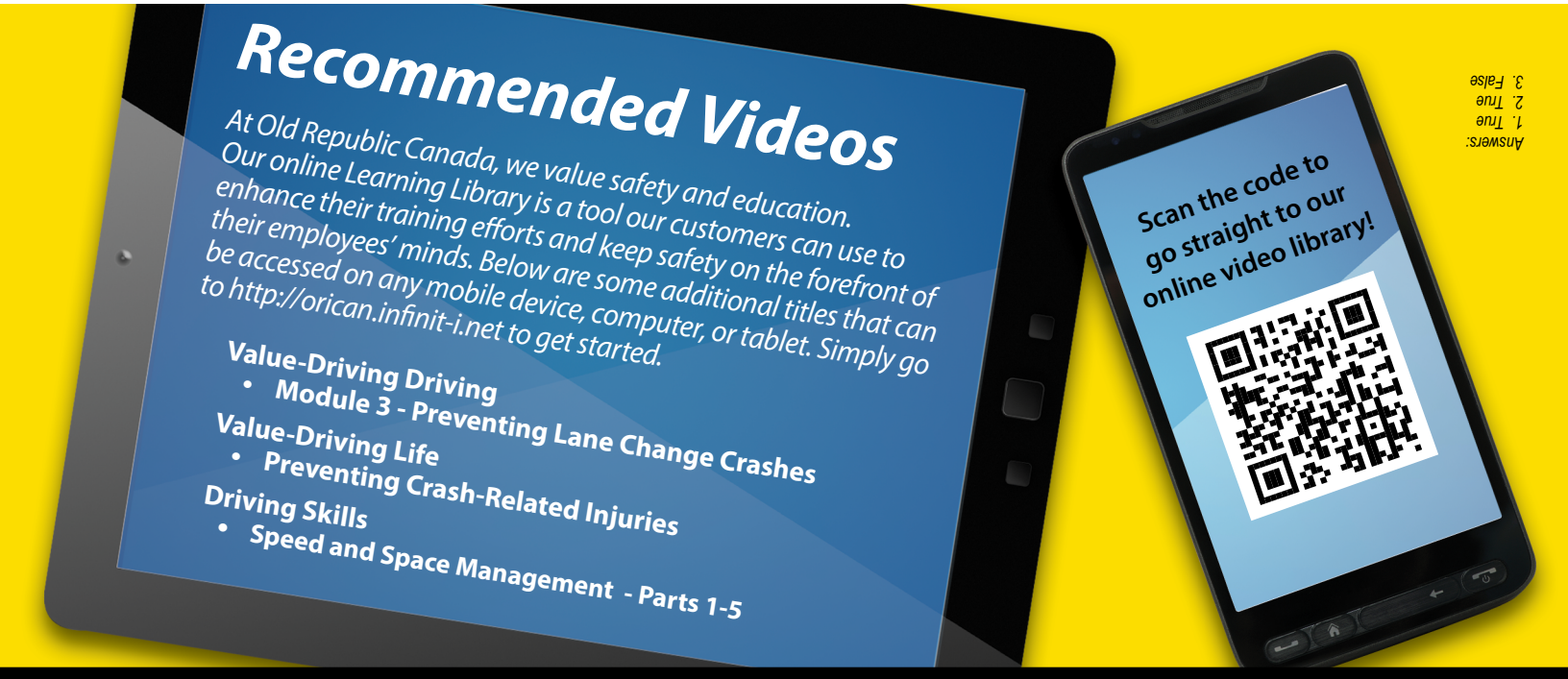
Knowledge Verification

Driver's Name: _____ Driver's Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ Date: _____

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

1. You should reduce your speed and increase following distance when road conditions are slippery ☐ True ☐ False
2. Based on the information provided, at 105 kph you should be at least six second behind the vehicle in front of you ☐ True ☐ False
3. You should always try to drive 3-5 kph above the flow of traffic. ☐ True ☐ False



Answers:
1. True
2. True
3. False

OLD REPUBLIC CANADA

SMART DRIVER®

MARCH 2024

UNDERSTAND PROPER FOLLOWING DISTANCE