AVOIDING REAR-END COLLISIONS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that over 33 percent of all collisions are caused by rear-end collisions. That accounts for over 2 million accidents a year. There are two primary factors that cause REAR-END COLLISIONS: driving too fast and traveling too close. To avoid collisions, SPEED and SPACE need to be safely maintained.

The first factor, maintaining SPEED, means either not exceeding the posted speed limit or not driving faster than conditions allow. Unsafe conditions could include heavy traffic, poor visibility, and poorly maintained brakes. The second factor is maintaining SPACE between vehicles, keeping in mind that the faster the speed, the shorter the reaction time and braking distance. Other factors include the size of the vehicle and the weight of the vehicle with passengers and gear.

A simple rule to use to AVOID REAR-END COLLISIONS is to maintain a safe distance, or space cushion, between you and the vehicle in front of you. When driving, use the following space cushions:

- Cars or vans should maintain a 3-second (minimum) following distance.
- Larger vehicles should maintain a 4-second (minimum) following distance.
- Add 1 second for speeds over 40 mph.
- Add 1 second for wet or slippery road conditions.

Do not get “boxed in” with other vehicles on each side or behind. With a safe space cushion, there is room to change lanes if a dangerous situation occurs around you.

Another safe practice is to back into parking spaces. Backing into a space allows for a safe departure and provides a full view of the surroundings to avoid colliding with another vehicle or object.

BE PREPARED. Maintain a space cushion for your vehicle, and “leave a way out.”