



The 2 Second rule

The **two-second rule** is a rule by which a driver may maintain a safe following distance at any speed.

The rule is that a driver should ideally stay at least two seconds behind any vehicle that is directly in front of the driver's vehicle. It is intended for motor cars, although its general principle applies to other types of vehicles.

The two-second rule is useful as it works at most speeds. It is equivalent to one vehicle-length for every 5 mph of the current speed, but drivers can find it difficult to estimate the correct distance from the car in front, let alone to remember the stopping distances that are required for a given speed. The two-second rule gets around these problems, and provides a simple and common-sense way of improving road safety. The practice has been shown to dramatically reduce the risk of collision, and also the severity of an accident should an accident occur. It also helps to avoid tailgating.

The risk of tailgating is largely caused by the accident avoidance time being much less than the driver reaction time. As a driving instructor, I always encourage my pupils to use the "2-second rule" regardless of speed or the type of road. **During adverse weather or hazardous conditions, it is important to maintain an even greater distance behind the vehicle in front of you.** If it is raining or wet multiply it by 4, and if there is snow or ice multiply it by 10.

It tells a defensive driver the minimum distance needed to reduce the risk of collision under ideal driving conditions. The allotted two-seconds is a safety buffer, to allow the following driver time to respond.

A method is generally needed to estimate the elapsed time, so that the driver can adjust accordingly.

To estimate the time, wait until the vehicle in front of you passes a solid object or fixed point on the roadway – e.g. a road sign, post box, lamp post etc. **(However, don't take your eyes off the vehicle for more than a second or that would defeat the purpose).** As you count to yourself the elapsed time in seconds, the front of your car

should pass the same point no less than two seconds later. If the elapsed time is less than this, increase the distance, then repeat the method again until the time is at least 2 seconds.

One can count the duration of time simply by saying “one... two...” but for greater accuracy, it is suggested that drivers say **“only a fool breaks the two-second rule”**. At a normal speaking rate, this sentence takes approximately two seconds to say, and serves as a reminder to the driver of the importance of the rule itself.

So to recap:
ALWAYS REMEMBER THE 2 SECOND RULE.

only a fool breaks the two-second rule

