

# BETWEEN the WHITE LINES

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A SAFETY NEWSLETTER FROM PGT TRUCKING

## DEFENSIVE DRIVING: THE KEY IS SCANNING AND PLANNING



Source: W.R. Berkley Company

As every professional driver knows, defensive driving is a much better strategy to prevent accidents than offensive driving. The National Safety Council's defensive driving formula is three fold:

- **Recognize the hazard;**
- **Understand the defense; and**
- **Act correctly in time.**

BY MAINTAINING A CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT WITH AMPLE ROOM TO MANEUVER YOU LEAVE AS MANY OPTIONS ON THE TABLE AS POSSIBLE.

The most important step in the formula is to recognize the hazard as early as possible. It doesn't do any good to recognize the hazard when you do not have enough time to avoid it. The best defensive driving strategy starts well before step number one in the formula mentioned above. You have to be able to see the hazard to recognize it. To do this:

- Keep a clear line of sight.
- Use proper following distance. If you are following a tractor trailer or some other type of tall vehicle, your line of sight is obviously limited due to the height of the vehicle blocking your view ahead.
- Control the space around you. You control the space around your vehicle by the choices you make about where you place it and how you react to where other drivers put their vehicles.



By not controlling your space, you start to take away your options to avoid a crash. Follow too closely and you take away the option to stay in your lane and stop to avoid an accident. Get boxed in on both sides and you take away the option to change lanes. Combine the two and you may put yourself into a situation where your only choice is to pick which accident that you are going to have.

By maintaining a clear line of sight with ample room to maneuver you leave as many options on the table as possible.

Then when you recognize that hazard you have plenty of time to execute your defensive move safely. Defensive driving takes discipline and self-control because you always have to be on your game. It only takes one mistake for a hazard to come busting through your defenses and catch you off guard. Professional drivers should understand this and be up to the challenge.

Proper following distance below 40 MPH is at least one second for every 10 feet of vehicle length. For a 70 feet tractor trailer, that is at least 7 seconds between you and the leading vehicle. For speeds over 40 MPH, you need one additional second per 10 MPH. Heavier loads, reduced visibility, weather and diminished tire traction require you to increase your following distance.

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVING



School will be back in session soon, which means more children on the streets.

- Watch for children congregating at bus stops.
- Slow down approaching school zones. It's the law.
- Expect and plan for children to be inattentive and dart out in front of you.
- When you see the school bus using red flashers and a stop sign, don't attempt to pass. Treat that school bus like gold.
- Double-check those intersections and crosswalks.

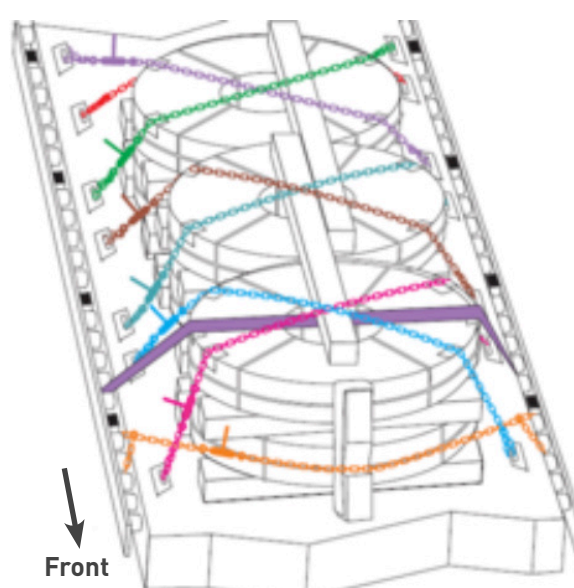
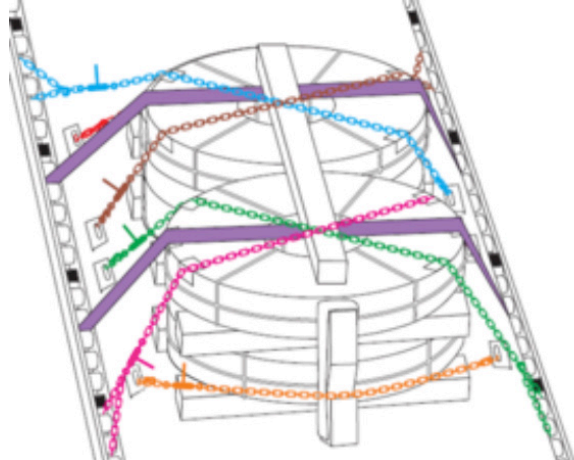
### DID YOU KNOW

- Any time you drop or pick up a trailer you should check the document tube or bubble for a current registration and inspection. These are located at different locations our various types of trailers. Also look for a current inspection decal located on the front seal or the left side of the frame rail. Contact the maintenance department with any questions.
- PGT has received 55 violations in the last 24 months in the Hours of Service Basic because a driver failed to keep his/her log book current to the last change of duty status per FMCSR reg. 395.8(f) (1).
- PGT has received 21 violations in the last 24 months in the Unsafe Basic because a driver failed to keep his/her seat belt on per FMCSR reg. 392.16.
- Record of Duty Status and Seat Belt violations are worth up to 21 CSA points for each occurrence. These violations are 100% avoidable.
- The cost of a generic drug is 80% to 85% lower on average than brand-name products according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- Obesity drives up medical costs and much of the extra expense is prescription drugs used to treat chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

## RELATE TO YOUR FREIGHT

## SLIT COILS EYE TO THE SKY

1. After loading the coils on the trailer in the approved location for weight distribution, check the pallets and banding to make sure they are secure and in good condition.
2. Using rubber belting, secure one chain or strap straight over the top of the coil, centered on each side.
3. Place rubber belting on the coils and then place a piece of 4"x4" lumber over the rubber belting across the coils lengthwise. If the row of coils is too long for one piece of lumber, use two pieces of lumber, overlapping them side by side at the center.
4. For each stack of coils, use edge protectors and secure two chains in an "X" over the top of the 4"x4" lumber. If the height of the stack slightly exceeds 36", add a chain across the "X".
5. To prevent forward and backward movement, place a trip block in front of the first coil, taking care to place rubber belting between the trip block and the cargo. Secure safety chains horse-shoed around the front and back stacks of coils against the trip block. Use edge protectors or rubber belting to protect the coils.



## TANDEM AXLE TRAILERS

- The bridge law for most states requires 41 feet or less from the kingpin to the center of the trailer tandem. If the trailer has a sliding tandem, ensure you have not exceeded this distance.



- Maximum weight on the trailer tandem axles is 34,000 pounds as opposed to 40,000 pounds on a spread axle trailer. If you are not sure, weigh your axles at a scale!
- Belly loading a tandem axle trailer is a dangerous thing to do. The center of gravity is greatly affected when loaded this way.
- Multiple coils should always be loaded spread apart to help stabilize the trailer. The closer you can get the weight to the axles the more stable your rig will be.
- Be aware when loading a large single coil on a tandem trailer that tandem trailers are not as stable as a spread axle trailer. Use extra caution when going around sharp curves and turns. A tandem axle trailer will cause a rollover more easily than a spread axle.

## QUESTION of the MONTH

What is the proper following distance at 60 MPH?

The first five drivers and first two office personnel to submit the correct answer to [safetynewsletter@pgttrucking.com](mailto:safetynewsletter@pgttrucking.com) will be awarded a \$25.00 gift card.



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If you have any questions or would like to see a specific topic, please contact: [safetynewsletter@pgttrucking.com](mailto:safetynewsletter@pgttrucking.com)



**SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S JOB - ALL THE TIME!**

Congratulations to the winners of last month's safety newsletter question!

Drivers: Just Shea, Bob Hamilton, Kevin Lynn, Richard Koger, Andrew Utz Office: Veronica Fogel, Thom Bates