

# When Someone's On your Tail



**F**ew things are more nerve-wracking on the road than someone driving 10 feet behind you at 60 miles an hour. You know that in a sudden stop, the tailgater is likely to plow right into you. It's understandable and tempting to want to put such people in their place. But your main concern should be your own safety and the safety of others on the road.

### **Allow Extra Distance—In Front of You**

When someone is tailgating you, slow down gradually until you have doubled your distance from the car in front of you. In ordinary driving conditions, this means allowing at least six seconds time between when the car in front of you passes a landmark and when you reach the same landmark. This will accomplish two things. First, if you need to stop suddenly, there will be some extra space in front of you so if the

car behind you hits you it won't push you into the car in front of you. And second, it may motivate the tailgater to back off or pass you.

### **Resist Revenge**

Avoid responding to a tailgater by speeding up or by hitting the brakes. You'll only be increasing your risk in an already dangerous situation. Instead, make it as easy as possible for the tailgater to pass you up. On the road, you're always better off repaying rudeness with courtesy.

Tailgaters are an increasingly common nuisance on our busy highways. With so many tailgaters, you must be extra alert for unexpected hazards, regularly scanning the road several cars ahead and observing either your rearview or sideview mirrors every five seconds. Staying alert is your best defense against the poor driving habits of others on the road.