

TAILGATING ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS DRIVING ERRORS

Tailgating is not just a public relations problem for professional drivers. It is also very dangerous.

Nothing ignites road rage any faster than having someone driving on your bumper. If it is a commercial vehicle (a loaded 45 passenger motor coach), it is downright terrifying as well as a cause for anger. The average motorist who has a run-in with a tailgating commercial vehicle will spend days cursing the whole industry to anyone who will listen.

A Safety Risk

A few poor decisions make life more difficult for everyone. Sooner or later, drivers who choose to tailgate will likely be injured.

Tailgating is a factor in one of every four accidents. Drivers who do it on a regular basis are playing Russian Roulette with other motorists.

Stopping Distance

I am a professional driver; I can stop on a dime. No, you cannot. The fact is, it takes your motor coach longer to stop than it does a car – air brakes or no air brakes. The time it takes a driver to identify the exposure, then react, you quickly realize it is difficult to stop a commercial vehicle.

Studies indicate it can take 300 feet to stop a commercial vehicle that is going 55 miles per hour. Three hundred feet is the length of a football field. If you are traveling 65 miles per hour, you can add another 100 feet to stopping distance.

Throw in poor road conditions, weather, tires or brakes and you may need two football fields to stop on the dime.

A Margin of Safety

Professional drivers always develop a margin of safety.

Professional drivers learn the (four-second rule). Watch the vehicle ahead of you, when it passes a fixed object, and then count “one thousand one, one thousand two....” Until you have counted to four. If your vehicle reaches the fixed point before you have finished counting, you are following too close.

In heavy traffic, it is not easy to maintain the space. Other drivers will pull into it. If you practice you can do it. The trick is to drop back as often as necessary to maintain the proper distance.

Excessive speed and tailgating go hand in hand. Slow down and back off. You are not invincible. The headline news article can be about your bad accident.

Best Wishes For Trouble Free Driving