

Which of these vehicles is maintaining a safe following distance?



It depends on driving conditions...

Determining a “safe following distance” is not just about a specific measurement. Instead, it depends on variables such as speed, vehicle weight, cargo, brake conditions, road conditions, weather conditions, perception distance, and reaction time to name a few.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

Focusing on time, not physical distance, will allow you to account for speed and ensure sufficient space between vehicles.

In Ideal Driving Conditions, under 40 mph:

- For X-Heavy/Semi Tractor-Trailers
 - Allow 1 second for every 10 feet of vehicle length at 40 mph and under.
 - This generally equates to a 6 second minimum following distance.

For Medium to Heavy Trucks

- Recommend a 4 second minimum following distance.

For Personal Passenger Vehicles/ Pickups

- Recommend a minimum of 3 second following distance.

In Ideal Driving Conditions, over 40 mph:

- Add an additional 1 second.

In Adverse Driving Conditions:

The National Safety Council recommends adding 1 second for every adverse condition. For example, if it is night, snowing and roads are icy, add an additional 3 seconds.

FMCSA recommends doubling your safe following distance in adverse weather conditions.