

Rear end collisions — Prevalence and prevention

Issue 12

In 2014, rear end collisions accounted for 21% of Vero's commercial motor vehicle claims. This crash type was second only to car park related incidents including collisions with objects or third party vehicles.

Rear end collisions often occur at high speeds and in built up traffic areas so damage costs and the likelihood of injury is very high. In fact, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) associates these crashes to about 16 per cent of all motor vehicle injury crashes in Australia.

The leading contributory factor to rear end collisions is driver distraction. A distracted driver takes longer to stop their vehicle as reaction time is increased. Speed is also a major contributing factor with breaking distance increasing exponentially the greater the speed of a vehicle.

Amazingly, around 90% of these rear-end collisions and associated injuries could have been avoided with just one extra second of warning time.

Tips to avoid a rear-end collision

1. Eliminate in-vehicle distractions

Avoid using mobile phones or completing any other activity whilst driving. This substantially diminishes your ability to safely drive a motor vehicle.

2. Keep a Safe Following Distance

Keeping a safe distance between your car and the car in front of you can help to avoid an accident. The 3-second rule is a simple way to double-check that you are driving at a safe following distance. Choose a fixed point that is even with the car in front of you. For example,

How long does it take to stop (driving an average sized vehicle)

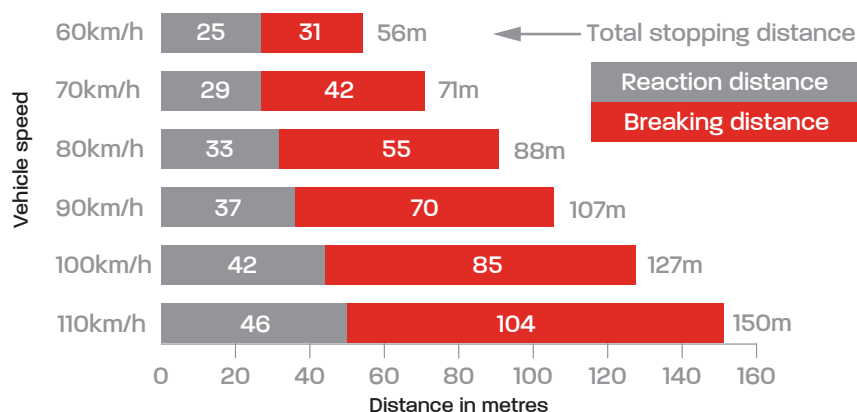


Table 1 - Stopping distances (Source - www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Driver-guide/Speeding/Stopping-distances.aspx)

a road sign or a building. If you reach that same fixed point before you can count to three, then you are driving too close to the car in front of you and you need to fall back a bit.

3. Some situations require an increased following distance

Extreme weather conditions can make it more difficult to perceive hazards and stop your car safely. Extra care and a greater following distance are advised in these situations.

4. Take notice of your surroundings

Be sure to scan the road ahead of you and be alert to road conditions all around you. Always be prepared for an unexpected situation!

5. Be predictable

Try to avoid breaking late to stop for traffic. Giving plenty of notice for preparing to stop allows any vehicles behind you more time to slow down and will reduce the likelihood of being impacted in the rear.

6. Ensure your vehicle is maintained and serviced properly.

Faulty brakes, steering and tyres can increase the likelihood of a rear end

collision. Be sure your vehicle is kept as a minimum to the manufacturer's standard for servicing and is inspected and maintained regularly.

Vehicle Technology

Auto Emergency Braking (AEB)

AEB is already a standard feature on a significant number of vehicle models available in Australia. This technology has the potential to significantly reduce the number and severity of rear-end collisions, ultimately reducing road trauma in Australia.

AEB typically uses sensors, radar, laser or cameras to scan the road ahead for risks and detect potential collisions with other vehicles, pedestrians or hazards. These systems then provide an initial warning to the driver when it senses an imminent crash and, if the driver does not respond, AEB will intervene and apply braking.

For more information:

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