

## Appendix 1: Safe Driving Practices

The following information may be found on the [New Zealand Transport Agency](#) website:

### Extend your vision

One of the most important things you can do to be a safer driver is to look well ahead of you when you're driving, so you can pick up potentially dangerous situations before it's too late.

The earlier you spot a potential hazard, the more time you will have to take evasive action. Rather than looking only as far as the vehicle in front of you when driving, you should actually be scanning the road in front to a distance of at least 12 seconds ahead of where your car is – that is, the place you will be after driving for 12 seconds.

As a rough guide, at 50km/h, 12 seconds is 166 metres or about two city blocks. At 100km/h, 12 seconds is 333 metres. This means at 100km/h you should look ahead as far as you can see.

### Keep your eyes moving

Many people only look **ahead** of them when driving. This means they're not getting the full picture of what's happening on the road.

As well as looking ahead, you should also use your mirrors to look to the **sides** and **behind** often enough to be aware of surrounding traffic.

Moving your eyes regularly and concentrating on what's going on around you will also help you to stay alert on long journeys.

### Create a safety cushion

You should create a 'cushion' of safety around your whole vehicle by making sure there is a safe distance in all directions between you, other vehicles and potential hazards.

This will give you and other road users more time and space to avoid any hazards.

- Create a cushion of safety **ahead** of you by maintaining a safe following distance. Use the two-second rule or the four-second rule when appropriate.
- Create a cushion of safety **behind** you by maintaining a safe distance between you and any following vehicles. If a vehicle is following you too closely, slow down, move over and let it pass as soon as you can do so safely.
- Create a safety cushion to your **sides** by keeping a safe distance from any hazards on your sides, such as driveways, parked vehicles, cyclists or children playing on the footpath.

### Don't get distracted

It's easy to get distracted when you're driving. Things like music, talking passengers, passing scenery and roadside advertising can all divert your attention from your driving and the road.

You must learn to ignore distractions and concentrate on your driving when you're behind the wheel. If, for any reason, you must look away from the road, follow the pointers below:

- Check well ahead and behind for any potential hazards. Don't look away if you can see potential hazards.
- Remember if you do look away from the road make sure you don't go off course.
- Never take your eyes off the road for longer that is absolutely necessary. For example, while driving at 90km/h, if you took your eyes off the road for two seconds you will travel 50 metres.

### **Identify escape routes**

Following the tips above will help you avoid many potentially dangerous crashes. However, despite all your best efforts, there may still be occasions when you find yourself on a direct collision course with another vehicle or other hazard.

For this reason, it is wise to identify possible escape routes all the time while you're driving. That way, if you find yourself in danger of a crash, you'll be ready to take quick evasive action.

Most escape routes will be to your left, so take note of what's on the left-hand side of the road as you drive. Ask yourself questions like:

- 'Is there a wide shoulder I could steer onto?'
- 'Can I steer off the road safely if I need to?'

If there are no safe escape routes, reduce your speed and increase your following distance so you can stop in plenty of time if a crash situation develops.

### **Prevention of fatigue**

Road accident research shows that the longer a person drives without a break, the greater their level of fatigue. Poor sleep quality and other activities can increase fatigue and affect subsequent driving. Drivers need to be particularly aware of their fatigue levels between 3.00-5.00am and 3.00-5.00pm.

Fatigue impairs driving ability and causes slower reaction times, particularly when encountering unusual, unexpected or emergency situations.

When undertaking long distance travelling, drivers should factor in regular breaks – at least a 10 minute break every two hours. Factor these breaks into planned travel times.

Have refreshment breaks during a long journey too. Avoid large meals but have regular snacks and drink plenty of water.

On long journeys, share the driving with another authorised driver.