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Drive and survive - six common risks and how to avoid them
No. 2 in the 'BIAM Six Pack' Series of Guidance Notes

1 **Accidents** - Drivers are least attentive on roads with which they are familiar. **Nine out of ten collisions** occur on roads with which drivers are familiar and within two miles of starting or finishing their journey (when their guard is usually relaxed).

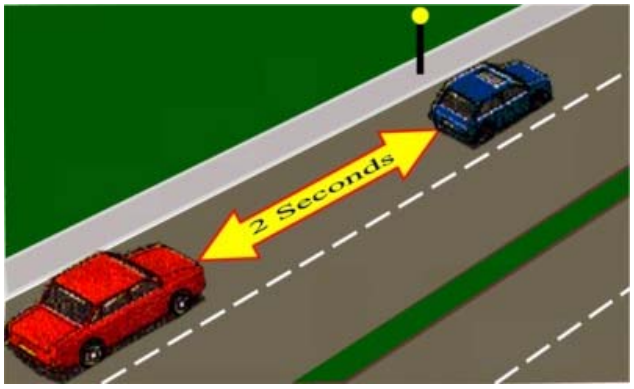
2 **Lack of concentration** - Concentration is the keystone of good driving. It is a primary duty but often a neglected one. Complete concentration will ensure that every detail is observed. It is often **the smallest detail** that gives the clue to what is about to happen. If it is missed, a collision or at least an unpleasant experience may result. **Concentration assists observation and both help to avoid collisions**.

3 **Fatigue** - the **greatest risk of fatigue is between midnight and 8.00 a.m.** Driver **alertness varies** with the time of the day. Alertness is reduced if driving is necessary at times when one would normally be asleep or has not had adequate sleep. Reactions tend to be slightly faster in the early evening rather than in the morning (there is a **pronounced dip in alertness after the midday meal**).

4 **Tailgating** (following far too closely) - is both dangerous and discourteous and shows poor driving judgement.

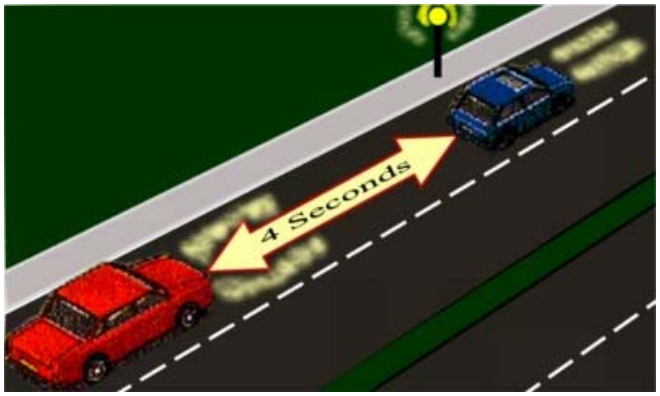
So, observe and practice the **"Two Second Rule" (Traffic Code Paragraph)**, which ensures a safe distance is maintained between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. The rule always works irrespective of the speeds involved.

"Don't be a fool! Use the two (2) second rule."



Use stationary objects (e.g. lamps- posts) to help you keep a two second gap

Use four (4) seconds for night driving and adverse road conditions.



It is far more safe and advantageous to keep at the correct distance from the vehicle in front; in so doing drivers will be able to:

a **maintain a good view**, which can be increased along the nearside or offside by a very slight adjustment, so that they are always aware of what is happening in the immediate vicinity.

b **stop their vehicle safely** in the event of the preceding driver braking suddenly without warning.

c **extend braking** so that a following driver is given more time in which to react.

d when safe, move up into a good overtaking position **with maximum visibility and the scope to manoeuvre.**

5 **Speeding kills** - The skill of driving safely at speed is not easily acquired. **Every driver has their own speed limit** - the highest speed at which they are safe and comfortable in any given situation. However, in emergency situations caution is often thrown to the wind as the driver is caught up in the incident. This is where it becomes dangerous, not only for them, but also for all other road users.

A minor driving error at **20 mph** can be **corrected,** at **40 mph** the same error could be **disastrous.** Remember a pedestrian struck by a vehicle at **20 mph** may be **injured,** but will probably **live**; the same pedestrian struck at **40+ mph** will probably **die**!
There is an inherent risk in any type of speeding but whatever the speed, **if it is inappropriate** in the circumstances, **it is dangerous.**

The **capabilities of the driver and vehicle**, and the **prevailing road, weather and traffic conditions must all be taken into account**, and then only when speeding can be justified. **Drivers should** always take time to **familiarise themselves with the controls and characteristics of a vehicle** to which they are unaccustomed, before attempting to drive fast.

6 **Inadequate reaction time and space** – your **thinking distance** varies in three (3) ways, depending on the:

a **speed of the vehicle** (controlled by you)

b **your physical and mental condition** (older/young; fit/unit; tired/medicated etc)

c **your degree of concentration being applied at the time** (e.g. using a mobile phone and with only one hand on the wheel; listening to (loud) in-car audio; distraction by sudden noises etc)

Braking distance is the distance needed for braking under normal driving conditions. The driver must know the distance required **to stop** under all circumstances, at all road speeds. Actual braking distance depends upon the vehicles capability (type of brakes/tyres etc), the gradient of the road (up or down hill) and the condition of the road surface (wet/dry etc).

Use the chart overleaf to enable you to **stop safely within the distance you can see to be clear**.

Shortest Stopping Distance

Thinking Distance combined with the **Braking Distance** will give the overall **Stopping Distance**.

SHORTEST STOPPING DISTANCES IN FEET
(assuming vehicle has good brakes, good tyres and a dry road surface)

SPEED (MPH)	THINKING DISTANCE	BRAKING DISTANCE	STOPPING DISTANCE
20 mph	20 feet	20 feet	40 feet
30 mph	30 feet	45 feet	75 feet
40 mph	40 feet	80 feet	120 feet
50 mph	50 feet	125 feet	175 feet
60 mph	60 feet	180 feet	240 feet

This guidance is adapted from the
Bermuda Institute of Advanced Motorists Advanced/Defensive Driving Course Manual
by Roger Kendall (Price: $25.00)
Copies are available from local bookstores or by mail order by contacting the BIAM Secretary via the BIAM website **www.biam.bm** or BIAM Secretary, PO BOX 1837, Hamilton, HM AX (please send a cheque for $27.50 (includes P&P) made payable to Bermuda Institute of Advanced Motorists).