

Press release: Highways England footage shows dangers of driving too close

The clip – captured by one of the dashcams in a Highways England patrol vehicle on the M6 in Cheshire – shows how quickly an incident can happen if motorists don't leave plenty of space between themselves and the vehicle in front.

The footage shows several cars braking sharply and one being struck by a HGV as an unrelated incident unfolds up ahead of travelling traffic.

[Highways England – Dangers of driving too close!](#)

Highways England's Head of Road Safety Richard Leonard said:

This footage is a startling reminder about the dangers of driving too closely to the vehicle in front.

It clearly shows that if you get too close to the car in front, you won't be able to react and stop in time if they suddenly brake.

We also know that tailgating makes the driver in front feel targeted and victimised, distracting their attention from the road ahead and making them more likely to make a mistake.

It is intimidating and frightening if you're on the receiving end. If that leads to a collision, then people in both vehicles could end up seriously injured or killed. We want everyone to get home safe and well.

If you wonder whether you are 'space invading', then remember the Highway Code, which says that drivers should allow at least a two second gap, which should be doubled on wet roads. If you are tailgated, then avoid speeding up, slowing down or staring in the rear-view mirror. Reduce the risk to yourself by driving normally, signalling clearly and allowing people to overtake.

A survey by Highways England reveals that tailgating is the biggest single bugbear that drivers have about other road users. And in-car research – using dashcams, facial recognition, emotion tracking and heart monitors – reveals that a driver's typical reaction to someone who tailgates them is surprise, anger and contempt, with a spike in heart rate.

Nearly 9 out of 10 people say they have either been tailgated or seen it. And more than a quarter of drivers admitted to tailgating.

The campaign has won the support of several high-profile advocates including

Formula 1 world champion Nigel and Mansell and former TopGear 'Stig' Ben Collins.

Ben – best known for his role on BBC motoring show TopGear as the 'tame' racing driver in the white suit – has coached hundreds of celebrities from Tom Cruise to Lionel Richie around the race-track and is also a championship winning Le Mans racing driver.

He says motorists should make sure they leave plenty of distance between themselves and the vehicle in front because driving too closely can hinder braking distances and visibility of incidents up ahead.

Highways England has a [dedicated website](#) offering advice on how to drive safely if people find themselves the victim of tailgating.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.