



Media Release

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Safe following distances can help reduce congestion

Leaving adequate space between vehicles could help improve the safety and efficiency of Perth's roads, a new RAC Mobility Bulletin *Maintaining safe following distances using low cost solutions* has found.

RAC General Manager Corporate Affairs, Will Golsby, said tailgating is a cause of frustration and distraction to other drivers, impacting on the quality of the journey and road users' safety while also contributing to congestion.

"The RAC supports the trial of low cost solutions, such as advisory signs and carriageway markings, which have the potential to reduce the risk of rear-end crashes and help smooth traffic flow by providing greater awareness of appropriate following distances," Mr Golsby said.

"Discouraging tailgating behaviour through low cost infrastructure solutions should be part of the response to improve the safety and efficiency of our roads."

An analysis of all reported crashes from 2009 to 2013 on the Kwinana Freeway, between the Mitchell Freeway and Canning Highway, found 76% were the result of rear-end crashes.

Tailgating can impact congestion and average vehicle speeds in two ways. Firstly, when a vehicle in front slows and subsequent cars must brake heavily creating a ripple effect. Secondly, if a crash does occur, this can cause significant delays and disruptions to traffic flow.

"The RAC would like to see a trial of carriageway markings, which can be dots, bars or chevrons painted onto the road to help drivers accurately judge and maintain a safe distance between them and the vehicle in front.

"International trials show these relatively low cost infrastructure solutions can be an effective way of increasing gaps between vehicles and reducing rear-end crashes."

The 'Keep Your Distance' trial on the M1 motorway in the UK, which used markings on the road and posted advisory signs to remind people to keep a safe following distance, resulted in a 56% reduction in road crashes.

"While not the only cause, tailgating and inattention are considered to be two of the main contributory factors to rear-end crashes. The impact of inattention is now comparable to the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by speed and drink driving."

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