

# *A Little Extra Caution Can Help Avoid Traffic Accidents*

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*TRIP* is a nationally recognized Supplemental Transportation Program that has been operated in Riverside County, California by the Partnership to Preserve Independent Living for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities since 1993. To read more about the program, visit [www.LivingPartnership.org](http://www.LivingPartnership.org)

**We all know we need to practice caution, care and courtesy while driving. As seniors, we have been obeying the traffic laws for many years. But it is a good idea to review some simple precautions for our own safety and the safety of others.**

**It is good advice to take our emotional temperature before driving. If you haven't slept all night, if you are bored, upset or depressed, these would be very good reasons why you shouldn't get behind the wheel. Driving requires total focus. This would be a good time to ask a friend or neighbor to give you a ride or delay travel until you are OK again.**

**Getting lost or being late can cause a great deal of anxiety and can cause us to take more risks in traffic. Determine a reasonable time schedule and use a map to plan your route before you leave.**

**Speed and speeding are not the same. Speed is how fast I am going; speeding is going too fast for conditions or posted limits. It is also a courtesy, if going slower than the posted speed limit, to keep to the right or slower lane so others might pass.**

**Collision rates are higher after dark than during daylight, because it is harder to see. Also, many drivers are tired and psychologically ready for sleep. Choose routes that are familiar, well lit and lightly traveled if you must drive at night or in bad weather. And, if you stay too long, and night comes on, stay overnight and leave in the morning. Make it an overnight excursion!**

**Of all the unsafe driving acts, tailgating is one of the most common and dangerous. As a senior it seems that this tip should go to those youngsters who drive as if we had a magnet in our trunks! But we might be driving too close too. The two-second rule can help gauge proper distance. Pick a fixed object along the side of the road such as a telephone pole or sign. When the vehicle in front of you passes the object, begin to count one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand... If your vehicle reaches the object before you finish counting, you are following too closely. This neat little trick works at any speed.**

**Tailgating readily lends to slamming on the brakes and can result in a skid. Locked wheel braking is less efficient and effective than threshold braking (applying a firm steady pressure on the brake pedal). To recover from a braking skid, release the pedal enough to get the tires rolling and you will then be able to steer again.**

**If someone is following too close behind you, let them pass as soon as they can.**

**The negative tales about seat belts, such as being trapped in a car that catches fire, are either myths or extraordinarily rare events. Using a seat belt increases your chances of reducing injury and surviving a collision.**

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