

Road safety: surviving the road

Experience sharing and essential habits · August 2026



Experience sharing: Safety alert

WHAT HAPPENED

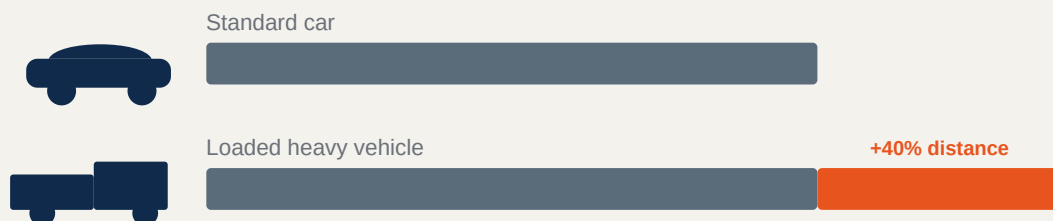
- **August 2026.** Busy highway. A heavy bucket truck is in transit.
- Traffic slows suddenly. The bucket truck violently rear-ends a vehicle (family car).
- Telematics data show a drop from **~65 km/h to 0 km/h** in moments.
- Severe property damage, temporary highway closure, and a worker taken into medical care by paramedics.

The takeaway: on the road, traffic can stop completely without any warning.

WHAT WE TAKE FROM IT

Physics and anticipation

Stopping distance = Reaction time + Braking distance



Stopping distance: inertia doesn't forgive.

The weight of our bucket trucks multiplies braking distance. Human reaction time stays the same, but the mechanics demand more room.



The routine trap: the illusion of control.

In dense traffic, the situation changes in a fraction of a second. An insufficient safety margin removes any chance to avoid a crash, no matter the driver's experience.

Defensive driving habits to adopt

The five keys of the **Smith System®** — the defensive-driving method our habits build on.



1. Look far ahead

Aim ~15 s ahead



2. Get the big picture

Scan the traffic



3. Keep eyes moving

Scan every < 2 s



4. Leave an out

Escape route



5. Make sure you're seen

Signal early

Our **seven Telecon habits** put these keys into practice and go further — distraction, speed, inspection, reporting, and reversing.

HABIT 01

Look far ahead and anticipate

The science of vision behind the wheel

Natural instinct limits our gaze to 3 seconds ahead — enough for survival on foot, but fatal at 90 km/h.

A professional driver moves their gaze to read the environment at least **15 seconds ahead**. This provides the space and time to predict what's coming and avoid emergency braking.



HABIT 02

Keep 4 to 6 seconds of distance

The math of braking at 100 km/h

The 4-to-6-second cushion is not a suggestion, it's a hard physical barrier: the strict time your brain and brakes need to stop a heavy vehicle.

Without that space, a rear-end collision is physically unavoidable.

Total stopping distance = 93 m (6 s)

Perception
0.75 s · 19 m

the brain analyzes the foot moves

Reaction
0.75 s · 19 m

Braking
4.5 s · 55 m — the mechanics act

At 100 km/h, your vehicle travels 27 metres per second.

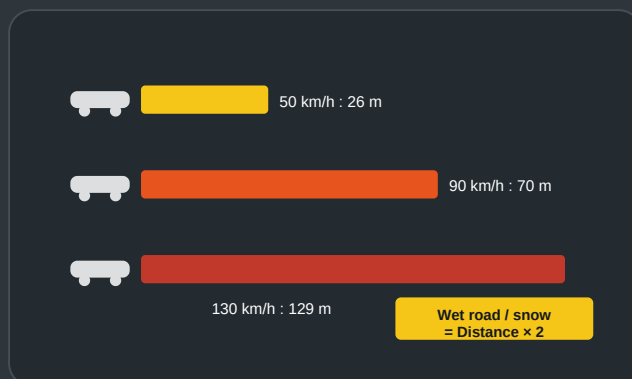
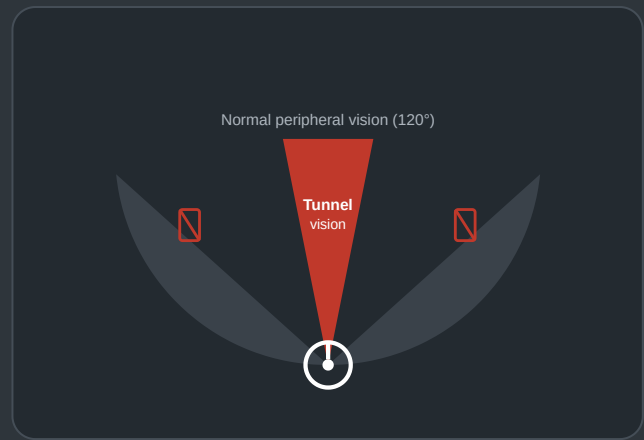
HABIT 03

Eliminate distractions

The invisible danger of tunnel vision

Distraction isn't only manual, it's cognitive. Whether handheld or "hands-free," a phone conversation causes tunnel vision.

The brain drops visual scanning, the mirrors disappear from your awareness, and your peripheral field collapses from **120° to a narrow zone** at the centre of the windshield.



HABIT 04

Match your speed to traffic and conditions

The kinetic energy trap

Impact severity and the distance to avoid it don't rise linearly: they scale with the **square of your speed**.

Light rain or a wet road instantly doubles braking distance. Slowing down isn't lost time, it's reprogramming your vehicle's destructive energy.

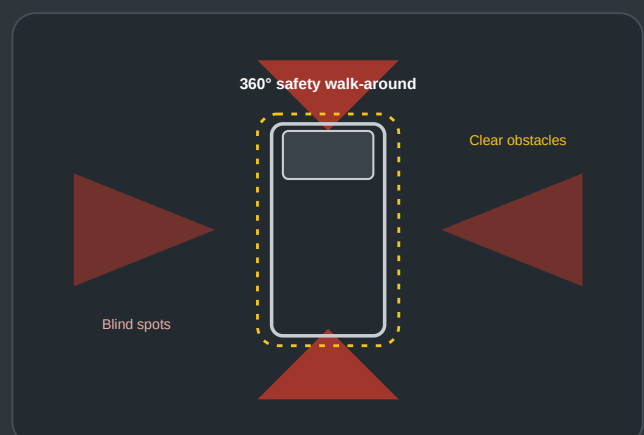
HABIT 05

Inspection and 360° safety walk-around

Secure the outside and the inside

A heavy vehicle has massive blind spots where a pedestrian, cyclist, or obstacle can disappear entirely. Before starting, a visual inspection and a 360° walk-around are mandatory.

Inside, secure the cab: in a hard stop, any loose object becomes a projectile.





HABIT 06

Report every near-miss

A near-miss is a free warning

In the risk pyramid, hundreds of near-misses always precede a serious collision.

Reporting a hazard, an emergency stop, or defective equipment isn't snitching: it's collecting vital data to fix the root cause before it costs a life.



...but only 1-3%
of driving time



Always back into parking

G.O.A.L.

Get Out And Look

- 1 Stop in a safe spot
- 2 Get out (3-point contact)
- 3 Look and assess the area
- 4 Safe? Alternatives?

HABIT 07

Master reversing

The #1 risk at Telecon

Reversing accounts for only 1 to 3% of driving time, but **over 30% of all our vehicle accidents**. It's the habit with the biggest payoff.

Before reversing, apply **G.O.A.L. — Get Out And Look**: stop, get out, look, assess. Back up slowly, horn and hazards on, never farther than needed. The best way to avoid a reversing incident: **don't reverse** — always back into your parking spot on arrival.

What we ask of everyone: our daily commitments

Before you go



Always complete the vehicle's **360° safety walk-around**.



Adjust your **route planning** to weather and traffic conditions.

Behind the wheel



Seatbelt mandatory at all times.



ZERO TOLERANCE for phone or any electronic device use while driving.

In all conditions



Match your speed to the flow of traffic.



Keep a safety space cushion. Drive company vehicles with the same care as your own.

Our goal: **Zero Vehicle Incidents.**

Resources, support and protocols

Roadside emergency



Protect the scene
and secure the area.



Call **9-1-1** for
immediate help.



**Notify your
supervisor** as soon
as you're safe.

Ongoing support & reporting



Report every **near-
miss** or hazard to
your supervisor or
Health & Safety
partner.



**Preventive
maintenance:** report
any defect or
damage to a fleet
vehicle immediately.

Your reference tools



See the official
procedure:



Road Safety
SSE-2000-TEL-
PR0

Safety is everyone's business.

Let's protect each other and get home healthy.

Health & Safety InfoFlash · Telecon · Internal distribution

Smith System® and The Smith 5 Keys® are registered trademarks of Smith System Driver Improvement Institute, Inc. This document does not reproduce their training material and describes the principles in Telecon's own words.