

The Car Caravan "Rubber Banding" problem

Most accidents which occur in caravans are rear-end collisions caused by following too closely combined with "rubber-banding".

Be aware of it and learn to anticipate its affects

Caravans of cars running close to each other have a tendency to change lengths when the Caravan Leader or other caravaners make speed changes. This is called "rubber banding". As the caravan speeds up, the distance between cars will increase. As the speed change migrates rearward, the amount of the speed change will also increase. The first car speeds-up and the next speeds-up a little more to catch the first. The third car speeds-up even more to catch the second and so on. This can end with the rear most cars increasing speed by 40-50 mph after the leader's speed only goes up 5 mph.

Rubber banding during speed increases can make driving at the back of the caravan at the least interesting and sometimes precarious. When the front and midsections notice the speed change, they end-up accelerating briskly. Once they get the speed change accomplished they immediately have to slow down to avoid running into the back of each other once they suddenly learn they've "caught-up". This effect is compounded toward the back of the caravan.

The sudden slowing of the caravan is potentially more dangerous: the lead car slows, the next car takes a split second to react, then slows more. The third car uses up distance in reacting then slows even more abruptly. In short order, especially if people are following too closely, you've got drivers way into ABS trying to stop in time and even people wrecking.

The Caravan Leader should be aware of the rubber band phenomena and always make speed changes slowly. Drivers in the middle and rear portions of the caravan must also be aware of this rubber band phenomena and ready to react – particularly when passing or if the Caravan is running tight,

Because "rubber banding" is a part of normal Caravan movement;

Expect that it will occur and be prepared to react.

Do not follow another caravan car too closely. Use the "Three Second Rule".

Do not watch only the Corvette in front of you – instead look ahead to see where the road is going and what lies ahead in traffic.