To use the three-second rule, a driver must select a fixed object on the road, such as a sign or tree, and begin counting when the vehicle in front of them passes the object. The driver should count "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three". If the driver's vehicle passes the same object before the countdown ends, they follow too closely and need to increase the following distance. The three-second rule is a simple guideline that can help drivers maintain a safe following distance.

But it is important to note that the distance required to stop a vehicle may vary depending on factors such as vehicle speed, road conditions and weather conditions. So it is always a good idea to adjust the following distances according to these factors to ensure safe driving.