



Vehicle Backing Safety

According to the National Safety Council, one out of four vehicle accidents can be blamed on poor backing techniques. Backing accidents cause 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year. Following the following tips can help prevent backing accidents while on the job.

GET TO KNOW A VEHICLE'S BLIND SPOTS

In a medium-sized truck, blind spots can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet behind a vehicle. Remember that mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing.

PARK DEFENSIVELY

The best way to prevent backing accidents is to avoid parking in a manner that requires them to back to exit. Never place yourself in a backing situation unnecessarily.

Choose easy-exit parking spaces that don't crowd neighboring vehicles and park your vehicle in the center of the parking space.

When parking in an alley, if an alley doesn't permit driving all the way through or room to turn around, back into it (if local ordinances permit) so that when leaving, the vehicle can pull forward into the street.

DO A WALK-AROUND

Walking around a vehicle gives a driver firsthand view of the backing area and any limitations. They can check for children, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards, and other dangers.

When performing a walk-around, drivers can check for obstructions, low-hanging trees and wires, and any other potential clearance-related problems.

AVOID COMPLACENCY

Every backing situation is new and different. Although you may often visit the same location frequently, be watchful each visit for changes and any new obstacles.

USE A SPOTTER

Use another person to help when backing. Both you and the spotter should use hand signals instead of verbal ones and make sure they understand each other's signals. Don't permit the spotter to walk backwards while giving instructions.

When you spot for yourself, return to the vehicle and start backing within a few seconds after finishing the walk-around. This will allow very little time for people and/or obstacles to change behind your vehicle.

Backing without a spotter should only take place after a driver has as much information about the area as possible.

PRACTICE

No amount of forward-driving experience can help a driver with backing a truck or other vehicles. All drivers need to practice, practice, practice in safe surroundings until they become familiar with the way the vehicle backs up compared to the direction the steering wheel is turned.

USE TECHNOLOGY

A back up alarm can help warn away pedestrians and drivers of other vehicles who may try to enter the area the vehicle is backing into.

Installation of rear-vision camera systems in vehicles eliminates rear blind spots. Investing in a rear-vision camera system for vehicles can put drivers in full visual control of the rear of a vehicle.