

Backing Up

What driving activity occupies less than 1% of a driver's time behind the wheel, but produces approximately 25% of all accidents?

Incidents at construction sites involving vehicles/equipment backing over or into things highlights a critical need for everyone to continually assess hazards and review safe job procedures.

You will need to navigate vehicles and equipment in and out of various locations and work sites. Backing accidents have been the highest *frequency* accidents with the lowest *severity* in construction.

When operating vehicles or equipment, be alert to their movement and potential movement.

Attention, visibility and control are often seriously reduced in reverse.

Proper site planning, controlling and coordinating equipment movement, traffic control systems and worker training are ways to reduce incidents.

To enhance your backing skills and to reduce the frequency and exposure of such accidents, adhere to the following safe backing procedures.

Pause for Safety

- Hazards**
- Personal body injuries, especially getting backed over or crushed between two vehicles or equipment;
 - Vehicle or equipment damage;
 - Rollovers and accidents; and
 - Backing into buildings, barricades, ramps and anything else that is behind you, even Workers.

PPE



Controls →



Strategies and Procedures

If you have any doubt, leave the vehicle and recheck.

Plan ahead and avoid backing whenever possible.

- Always park so your first move is forward. Do not put yourself into unnecessary backing situations.
- When practical, avoid parking the vehicle in a way that will require it to be backed at a later time.
- If you learn your routes and hazards around you, you may avoid certain backing situations;

Clean windows and mirrors thoroughly to provide a clear view.

- Never back a vehicle or piece of equipment when any mirrors are covered with dirt, snow, frost or other substances that keep you from visually backing up safely;

Get to know your blind spots on your vehicle or equipment;

Walk around your vehicle or equipment and check and recheck your path of travel.

- Before any attempt is made to back, always get out of your cab to look and see what lies between you and your backing destination;

If you lose sight of ground workers, stop vehicle motion. Determine that your co-workers are in a safe location prior to resuming movement.

Although ultimately the responsibility of backing safely falls on you, it is helpful to use a reliable, well-trained guide or spotter whenever possible to assist when backing.

Spotter guidelines:

- Your Spotter should always be in a visible position
- Know what the hand signals are between the spotter and driver;
- Spotter uses highly visible PPE, especially during darkness;
- If you lose sight of or eye contact with the spotter or guide, immediately stop movement of the vehicle/equipment
- Never put yourself between the vehicle, equipment or an obstacle; and
- Stop the driver if you are unsure.
- If you must spot yourself and have no guide, after your walk around return to your vehicle or equipment quickly and start backing.
- This will allow very little time for people and/or obstacles to move behind you;

Sound your horn (if not equipped with a back-up alarm);

Back slowly and cautiously (never at a speed faster than a brisk walk); and

Use your mirrors at all times, they are a major key to any backing maneuver.

If parked or stopped, always use proper parking procedures, set transmission in appropriate gear (neutral) and set the parking break.

