



Toolbox Talks

Backing Up Safely



When backing up any vehicle follow these basic steps:

1. **Adjust Mirrors.** Before moving the vehicle check the rearview and side mirrors and adjust them. The goal is to make the blind spots as small as possible, so you have the most visibility when backing up. If available in the vehicle, rear-vision cameras provide added visibility, but drivers should not depend solely on the camera.
2. **Look Back.** Drivers should turn to the right and look out the back window so they can see in the direction the vehicle is moving. Continually check all mirrors while in reverse.
3. **Reverse Slowly.** Drive in a careful and controlled manner throughout the back-up maneuver. It is more difficult to maintain steering control when backing a vehicle so accelerate slowly.
4. **Steer Properly.** When backing up without a trailer, turn the steering wheel in the direction the rear of the vehicle should go. When backing up a vehicle with a trailer attached, turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction the trailer should be moving.

When possible, avoid driving in reverse unless it is necessary. To avoid backing up, there is some planning that needs to happen when you are parking the vehicle.

- Choose pull-through parking spaces when they are available.
- Consider backing into a parking spot upon arrival, which can be safer than backing out of it when leaving.
- Select a parking space that provides for an easy exit that is away from other obstacles and is not likely to become crowded with other vehicles.
- If parking a vehicle in a parking lot with designated spots, park in the center of the parking space.
- For alley parking, remember that vehicles should not be reversing out of an alley into a busy roadway. Before parking, ensure that when exiting the alley, the vehicle can 1) pull through the alley to the other side, or 2) turn around in the alley. If not, back the vehicle up into the alley to allow for a safe forward exit.

As the driver or equipment operator, consider the following safety precautions anytime you put the vehicle into reverse:

- Avoid distractions – backing up requires concentration and demands your full attention.
- Use an experienced spotter if you do not have full view of the path of travel and potential hazards. Agree on hand signals before starting and keep the spotter in sight at all times while they are guiding.
- Do not assume that people will notice the vehicle is moving. Often pedestrians are distracted or looking in a different direction and will not notice that a vehicle is starting to back up. If you see someone in your path of travel, stop and wait.
- Increase the vehicle's visibility if you can – turn on the hazard lights, honk the horn, or ensure the back-up alarm is working (if required).

