

Vehicle Backing Safety Tips

Even though most drivers spend less than one percent of their driving time in reverse, the National Safety Council (NSC) estimates that one out of every four vehicle accidents occur while backing.

In the United States, 50 children per week are backed over by vehicles, and 2 of those 50 are killed. Over 60 percent of these backing incidents involve larger vehicles. Even with the latest in-vehicle technology, like backup cameras or sonar sensors used for parking assistance, vehicles contain blind spots that can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet behind, more than big enough to hide a child or small objects.

Plan Your Journey Ahead of Time

Before you even start the vehicle, plan your journey ahead of time. Thinking about the trip ahead while backing contributes to a loss of focus. So, check the local weather and traffic conditions, plan for alternate routes in the case of unexpected emergencies or detours. Verify parking locations at or near your destination ahead of time.

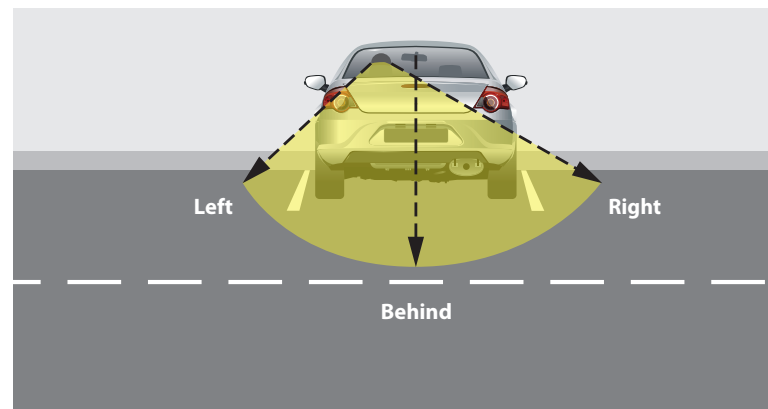
Park Smart

Before you enter a parking lot, garage or customer driveway, plan your exit ahead of time. Seek spots that do not require you to backup when you leave. A “pull-through” spot is easier and safer to exit. If you can’t find a spot to pull-through, the next best thing is a parking spot to the driver’s left, as it provides the best visibility when backing out. Upon your return to the vehicle, remember to do your “Circle of Safety” check to eliminate any obstructions.

Perform a ‘Circle of Safety’ Check

Anytime you must backup your vehicle, use the “Get Out and Look” method and circle around your vehicle, looking for any hazards, making sure that your intended path is clear. Also, confirm both your backup lights and alarm are functioning properly. Taking the time to perform this “Circle of Safety” will give you a firsthand view of the backing area and any limitations. Be on guard at all times and know your clearances. Check for any obstructions, clearance-related obstacles such as: low hanging tree limbs, bridges, wires and anything or anyone else that may come into contact with your vehicle.

Know your clearances. As you perform your “circle of safety” check, look for obstructions, low-hanging trees and wires, low stanchions, garage height limits, and any other potential clearance-related problems.



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Vehicle Safety Features and Blind Spots

Does your vehicle have backing safety sensors and alarms? Are they turned on? Even if they are functioning, do not consider them a replacement for the following safety steps. Even the most advanced vehicles have blind spots. Mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing. Check all mirrors, but don't just focus on them! Turn your head and scan the entire area before moving the vehicle.

Minimize Backing Distractions

Turn off music, talk radio, or any other sounds that can distract from what is happening around you. Eliminate phone use, texting, and any other smart devices that may cause you to look away from the task at hand.

Use a Spotter

Especially in tight quarters or unfamiliar parking areas, use another person to help them when backing. The driver and spotter should use hand signals instead of verbal ones and make sure they understand each other's signals. Don't have the spotter walking backwards while giving instructions.

Finally, Remember That Every Situation is Different

As a driver, you often visit the same location more than once. You should be watchful each visit for changes and new obstacles, such as new vehicles, trash cans, construction, people, and so on.

Comprehensive Driver Training Program

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