



EVERYDAY SAFETY TAILGATE TALKS

In conjunction with the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association

Backing Up Safely

Backing accidents are preventable. You need to make sure that “safety is in gear” because there is a higher level of responsibility on operators as the size of the equipment increases and the visibility to the rear decreases.

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

There are several reasons why accidents happen when backing up vehicles. After all, the vehicle is being operated at a slow speed, so it’s unlikely there will be a serious injury or that little damage will be done if something is hit. Right? Well, not exactly.

Many backing accidents occur because operators rely too heavily on their vehicle mirrors. Even with the best of mirrors and mirror arrangements, there still are blind spots to the sides of the vehicle and behind it.

ALWAYS

- Make every effort to avoid backing. Try to park so that you can pull out into traffic.
- Park in a location away from traffic or parked vehicles, so you can avoid setting yourself up for a collision.
- Walk around your vehicle and check for any people, and clearance from other vehicles or obstacles on the ground OR overhead.

Sound your horn with two quick beeps, check rear and side view mirrors, watch side clearances and then back slowly, keeping the vehicle in complete control.

NEVER

- Make “Y” turns in private driveways.
- Be in such a hurry that you can’t take time to stop and look around your vehicle.
- Make sudden turns or maneuvers on a roadway to avoid backing.

HAZARDS TO LOOK FOR

As the size of the vehicle increases, so do the operator’s blind spots.

There is always the possibility of hidden hazards, as well. Walk around the vehicle and look up, down, and all around.

Backing a vehicle or heavy equipment is often said to be a true test of an operator's ability.