

Risk Control Bulletin

Backing Techniques

RISK CONTROL



A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study determined that over 90% of backing accidents can be attributed to one of the following causes:

- Driver was unaware of the obstacle
- Driver used improper backing techniques

Yet, these accidents can be prevented by using some of the following simple accident prevention techniques:

Preplan trips to avoid or to minimize the need for backing.

- When entering an alley that does not permit drive through or turnaround, back into the alley, if allowed by local ordinance, since it is usually safer to back into the area with less traffic. This will enable you to see the traffic as you exit the alley.
- When backing out of an alley, ask someone to be your guide, and signal when it is safe to back into traffic.
- When a guide is used, instruct the guide to use appropriate hand signals rather than voice commands.
- The majority of backing accidents with bodily injury involve children under the age of 5. Make a walk around inspection of your vehicle before backing, especially in an area where young children can be anticipated.
- Park defensively to prevent your vehicle from rolling into another vehicle. If parking on an incline, turn the front wheels into the curb to prevent the vehicle from rolling.
- Park in the middle of the parking space. This will allow you room to exit the parking space without backing and provide space if backing is required.
- Never take any situation for granted. Even though you may have parked or backed into a location many times, evaluate the location to determine if clearances have changed or if new obstacles are present.
- Experience is required to develop good backing techniques. If you have access to a designated

area to practice backing – use it.

- Learn exactly how the rear of the vehicle responds to every little movement of the steering wheel. Practice - Practice - Practice!
- Know what's going on around you at all times and perform all backing maneuvers SLOWLY.
- Check all your mirrors when backing. Know the mirror blind spots. Conduct a walk around inspection of your vehicle to check these blind spots or get someone to guide you while backing. Know the clearance to all obstacles and the exact distance to your stopping point.