

SAFETY TALK



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY • UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE • NORTH DAKOTA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Vehicle Backing Safety Sheet

According to the National Safety Council, one out of four vehicle accidents can be blamed on poor backing techniques. Backing accidents cause 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year. The use of safe vehicle backing tips by employers and employees can help prevent accidents while on and off the job.

- **Get to Know The Blind Spots.** In a medium-sized truck, blind spots can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet behind a vehicle. Drivers need to remember that mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing.
- **Think in Advance.** Drivers should not put themselves into unnecessary backing situations.
- **Park Defensively.** Drivers must choose easy-exit parking spaces that don't crowd neighboring vehicles and park their vehicle in the center of the parking space.
- **Perform a Walk-Around.** Walking around a vehicle gives a driver firsthand view of the backing area and any limitations. They can check for children, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards, and other dangers.
- **Know the Clearances.** When performing a walk-around, drivers can check for obstructions, low-hanging trees and wires, and any other potential clearance-related problems.
- **Every Backing Situation is New and Different.** Sometimes a driver visits the same location several times a day and should be watchful each visit for changes and any new obstacles. Don't get complacent.
- **Use a Spotter.** A driver should ask someone 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. Ensure the spotter doesn't walk backwards while giving instructions.
- **When There is No Spotter.** Perform a walk-around and return to the vehicle within a few

seconds after finishing. This will allow very little time for people and/or obstacles to change behind the vehicle. Backing without a spotter should only take place after a driver has as much information about the area as possible. A back up alarm can help warn away pedestrians and drivers of other vehicles who may try to enter the area the vehicle is backing into.

- **Never Assume.** Driver's should never assume people will walk safely behind or stop for backing vehicles. If you see someone in your mirror, stop until you are certain they are clear and in a safe position.

Long-Term Solutions to Safe Backing

- **Alarms, Cameras, Radar, and Mirrors.** Installation of back-up alarms will help people be aware of a backing vehicle. Varying alarms with broadband white noise make it easier to locate.
- Installation of rear-vision camera systems in vehicles eliminates rear blind spots. Investing in a rear-vision camera system for vehicles can put drivers in full visual control of the rear of a vehicle.
- Radar systems will assist drivers in warning as vehicles, objects, or people are near the backing vehicle.
- Mirrors do not need to be high-tech. Operable, clean and properly adjusted mirrors make a world of difference.
- Creation and support of a company-wide training program on safe backing practices.

Resources: Know The Blind Spots Poster (Free)
<https://www.workzonesafety.org/data-resources/public-awareness/know-the-blind-spots-poster/>

Work Zone Safety Clearinghouse
<https://www.workzonesafety.org/training/rsp-runoversbackovers-course/>