



GOALS

This safety session teaches employees to:

- Use safe backing techniques and employ available technology to back safely.
- Work effectively with a spotter to prevent backing accidents.

Applicable Regulations: None



1. Backing accidents cause many injuries and some deaths every year.

- The National Safety Council says that 1 in 4 motor vehicle accidents, commercial and noncommercial, involves improper backing.
- Causes of backing accidents include not having a good enough view of the area behind the truck, poor visibility conditions, not enough space to maneuver, or backing too fast.
- It's estimated that backing accidents cause hundreds of deaths and 15,000 injuries a year.
- Backing accidents can injure people working nearby, other drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc., and can cause damage to property or other vehicles.

2. Safe backing techniques can help prevent accidents and injuries.

- Perform a walkaround inspection of your truck before backing up, and then return to the vehicle and back up before conditions have a chance to change.
- Get to know your truck's blind spots, which experts say can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet behind a medium-size truck.
- Don't place too much reliance on your rear mirrors, which can never really give you a view of the entire area behind or a true indication of the hazards.
- Realize that different backing situations present different challenges and hazards, and make sure you understand the risks and necessary precautions for each.
- Understand, too, that conditions change, and even though you may be familiar with a location, new hazards and obstacles may have developed since the last time you were there.
- Practice backing in safe surroundings until you become familiar with the way each truck you drive handles while backing up.
- Think before you park or back up, and see if there is a safer alternative to backing.
- Identify clearances behind the truck, on the sides, and above (for example, wires, overhead structures).

3. Using a spotter is one of the best ways to avoid backing accidents.

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says that using spotters is a proven method for preventing backing accidents and injuries when a truck driver has an obstructed view of the area behind his or her truck.



- Spotters may be a coworker driving with you or other employees of your trucking company, or you may call upon workers at locations where you make deliveries to spot.
- When using a spotter, make sure to agree on hand signals before backing.
- Always maintain visual contact with your spotter while backing.
- Make sure your spotter devotes his or her entire attention to helping you back up, not performing other tasks, talking on the phone, etc.
- Stop immediately if you lose sight of your spotter.
- Spotters should wear high-visibility clothing when visibility is poor, such as at night or in rain or snow.

4. These additional backing safety tips can also help prevent accidents.

- Make sure the truck's backup alarm is working properly, turn on flashers, and use the horn as necessary to warn anyone behind you.
- Go very slowly while backing up and be prepared to stop at the first sign of trouble.
- Be selective about where and how you park your truck so that you can make the safest exit.

5. New technology provides safety devices to help avoid backing accidents.

- In addition to backup alarms and flashers, your truck may be equipped with other safety devices.
- Make use of any safety devices at your disposal, such as:
 - Camera systems that give you a clear rear view as you back;
 - Obstacle detection systems that warn you if there is someone or something in your path while backing; *and*
 - Electromagnetic sensing devices worn by people working near backing trucks, which can warn workers of a backing truck and/or stop the truck.
- In addition to safety devices, traffic control plans at worksites coordinate the flow of equipment and vehicles to prevent backover accidents.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

Ask participants to describe the precautions they take to prevent backing accidents, and review your organization's driving safety rules.



CONCLUSION:

- Take proper precautions when backing to prevent accidents.
- Backing up a truck can be hazardous. Many accidents and injuries are caused by improper backing. Make sure you take the necessary precautions to ensure safety when backing any truck you drive.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Commercial Vehicle Backing Safety quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their ability to back safely and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.