

FLEETING IDEAS

STAY AHEAD OF BACKING ACCIDENTS

Driving one mile to reach a destination is easy. In contrast, backing five feet can be the most hazardous driving you do all day. Backing not only poses a threat to pedestrians and surrounding property, but also can seriously damage your safe driving record. Obviously, the easiest way to avoid backing accidents is to avoid backing unless it is absolutely necessary.

Backing from the driver's side is the safest backing method and should be your first choice. Turn your steering wheel counterclockwise, use your left side mirrors and look out the left door. This gives you a greater field of vision, allowing you to see the entire area into which you are backing.

If you are unable to use the driver-side method, back straight out, then turn in the desired direction. Before using this method, you should get out of your vehicle and check the blind spot directly behind your vehicle. Alternately check your mirrors on both sides to guide your vehicle and avoid obstructions on either side.

Blind-side backing causes your vehicle to move to the right and block your line of sight. This is the most dangerous backing technique and should always be avoided unless you have a spotter/guide with unquestioned reliability. If you have any doubts, don't back.

KEY POINTS

- Avoid backing by planning ahead so that you can leave without backing.
- If you must back, back when you first arrive.
- Scan the area as you approach it. Back immediately but slowly.
- If your vehicle is not equipped with a back-up alarm, tap your horn every two or three seconds and turn on four-way flashers.
- Check your mirrors. Pay special attention to pedestrians and oncoming traffic.
- Driver-side backing is the safest method. Turn steering wheel counterclockwise, use mirrors and look out left door for greater visibility.
- Use your mirrors to see behind your vehicle when backing straight.
- Always use a reliable spotter/guide.
- If you have any doubts, don't back.



Remember: You can stay ahead of backing accidents