

RISK CONTROL

Target Accident Reduction Plan
(TARP)



RISK CONTROL

REDUCE RISK. PREVENT LOSS. SAVE LIVES.

Preventing backing accidents

Backing a commercial motor vehicle is not an easy task under the best of circumstances. It becomes even more difficult when you find yourself in a situation where there is limited space, numerous obstacles, and other traffic and pedestrians nearby.

Objective

The objective of this Target Accident Reduction Plan (TARP) is to assist experienced drivers in preventing backing accidents. The following topics are discussed:

- **Backing challenges**
- **Safe backing procedures**

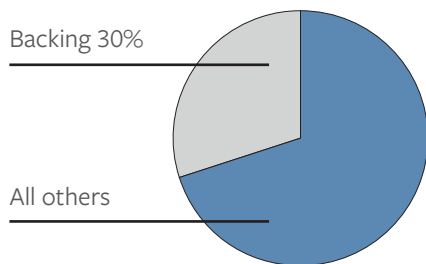


Loading docks can present many challenges when backing.

Backing challenges

Some industry statistics suggest that backing accidents account for approximately 30 percent of all commercial vehicle accidents. While backing accidents typically do not result in significant property damage, that 30 percent still adds up to a lot of money spent on preventable accidents. Also, backing accidents can seriously or fatally injure someone, such as a dock worker or pedestrian, who is in the blind spot of a backing vehicle.

Backing is one of the most difficult parts of a professional driver's job. Most backing accidents occur when a driver fails to ensure that the areas behind and to the sides of the vehicle are free of obstacles.



Several key factors that make backing challenging, stressful and dangerous include:

- > Limited space to maneuver
- > Limited view of the areas behind and to the sides of the vehicle (blind spots)
- > Numerous obstacles to maneuver around
- > Traffic and/or pedestrians nearby
- > An unfamiliar delivery location

Safe backing procedures

Backing accidents are usually considered preventable by the driver. The best way to prevent a backing accident is to avoid backing up whenever possible. While there may be opportunities to avoid backing on some occasions, backing remains an integral part of the job for many drivers.

When backing is required, following safe backing procedures is the key to preventing accidents.

Adjust and clean mirrors

Your mirrors should be clean and adjusted so you can comfortably see as much of the surrounding area adjacent to the rear of your truck or trailer as possible. If you must lean forward or crane your neck, your mirrors need adjusting.

Avoid backing from the “blind side”

Backing up from the blind side (passenger side) severely limits your view of your vehicle and the surrounding area. This is dangerous and can quickly put you at risk of causing an accident. Whenever possible, back from the driver's side to allow for the best view of the area and your vehicle.



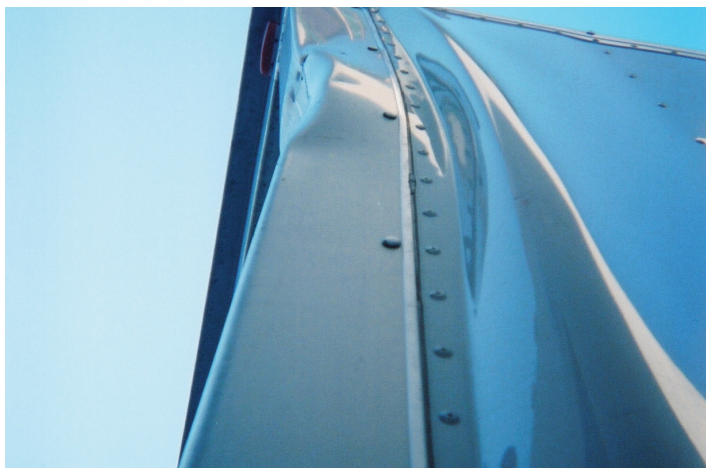


Having to lean forward is an indication your mirrors are not properly adjusted.

GOAL

Remember to practice the GOAL procedure every time you back up - **Get Out And Look**. Are the height and width of the area you are backing into sufficient to back safely? Has anything changed since the last time you backed into the spot? Pay particular attention to overhead obstacles, e.g. roof awnings. All drivers should have a tape measure to check clearance in tight spaces.

In tight-width situations, you should establish how much space you have on both sides to determine if it is possible to clear all obstacles. Once you have determined the distance needed to clear the obstacles, evenly spacing your vehicle at the same distance on the driver's side to an adjacent trailer/obstacle as you back up should give you enough room to clear both sides. If in doubt, **Get Out And Look**.



Van trailer damaged from backing.

GOAL – Get Out And Look

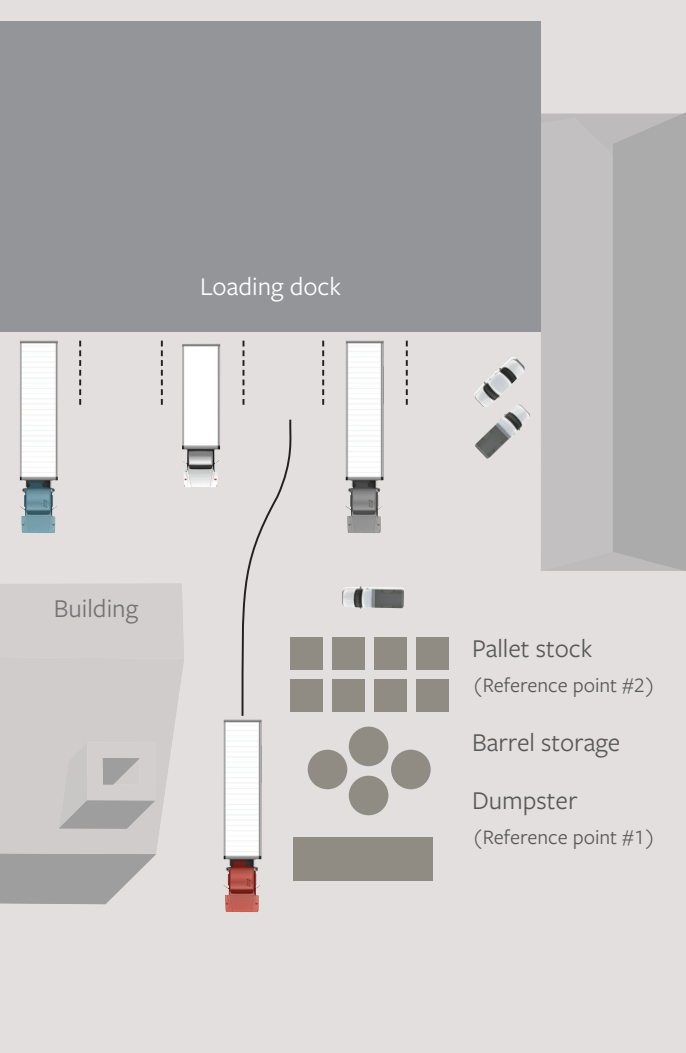
Proceed with your backing maneuver as soon as possible while the space remains clear and before the situation changes. If a period of time passes before you attempt the maneuver, **Get Out And Look** again to ensure it is still safe to back up.

Avoid distractions

Backing up requires your full attention. Turn off your cell phone and radio. Roll down your window so you can better hear and see what is happening outside.

Select reference points

In an area where you must back up a long distance or where there are many obstacles, set up reference points. Back to the reference point, get out and check behind your vehicle, and then establish the next reference point.



When backing up long distances or where there are many obstacles, establish reference points to back to.

In the diagram above, the driver is backing from reference point #1, the dumpster, to reference point #2, the pallet stock. The driver needs to get out at each point and reassess the situation. If reference points are not available or are difficult to see, create your own reference point by placing a glove or other marker on the ground.

Check trailer doors

Unless there are trailers on both sides of the dock area you are backing into, wait until you are near the dock before opening the trailer doors. Make sure door tie backs are in good condition and the doors are latched securely.

If you hit a bump or go over a curb, stop and get out to confirm that the doors are still fastened in place and that your cargo is properly secured.

Signal your intentions

Sound your horn before backing and activate your four-way flashers to warn those around you.

Back up slowly

Patience is important. Give yourself time to monitor what is happening around your vehicle. Allowing more time to react may avoid an accident. Backing slowly also allows for better vehicle control. If a vehicle or pedestrian enters your blind spot while you are backing, stop and do not move again until you see them reappear. If necessary, **Get Out And Look** to ensure the area is clear. Don't assume pedestrians and other motorists know that you are backing up.

Use a guide, if necessary

In situations where backing is particularly challenging, using a reliable guide or spotter can be helpful. Make sure you both agree on what signals you will use and what they mean. Your guide should be positioned in a place where he or she has a good view of the area and remains visible to you at all times. If you lose sight of your spotter, stop immediately.

Using a guide does not relieve you of your responsibility for backing safely. As the vehicle operator, you will more than likely be held accountable for any accidents that occur.



Agree on signals, position your spotter in a safe location and keep your spotter visible at all times.

Dangerous maneuvers

There are some backing maneuvers that should be avoided because they present a high degree of danger and can result in serious accidents. These include:

- **Backing across a street or highway**

This presents a serious hazard for other motorists, especially when visibility is reduced as a result of darkness, fog, smoke, heavy rain or snow. Many serious trailer under-ride accidents have been attributed to motorists striking a trailer while the driver was attempting to back across the roadway.

- **Backing up in traffic**

If you have missed your turn, do not react by immediately backing up. It is safer to continue around the block or approach the location from a different direction.

- **Standing on the step**

Standing on the step to get a better view while backing up could cause you to slip and fall. You should remain in your vehicle with the door closed while backing.

- **Losing patience**

Other motorists may become upset because you are blocking traffic. This can be an unfortunate and unavoidable part of the job. When you lose patience, you lose control of the situation. Getting in a hurry while trying to get out of a situation can affect your judgment and lead to a mistake that could result in an accident.



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Quiz

TARP: PREVENTING BACKING ACCIDENTS

Name _____

Date _____

Circle the correct answer.

1. The best way to prevent a backing accident is to:
 - a. Avoid backing up whenever possible
 - b. Plan how you are going to back up
 - c. Follow safe backing procedures every time you back up
 - d. All of the above
2. Backing accidents account for approximately what percentage of commercial vehicle accidents?
 - a. 15 percent
 - b. 30 percent
 - c. 40 percent
 - d. 50 percent
 - e. None of the above
3. GOAL stands for:
 - a. Get Out And Load
 - b. Going Out At Last
 - c. Good Operators Always Leave
 - d. Get Out And Look
 - e. None of the above
4. When possible, backing should always be done:
 - a. Into lanes of traffic on streets and highways
 - b. From the driver's side
 - c. From the passenger side
 - d. None of the above
5. Backing accidents are:
 - a. Usually due to mechanical problems
 - b. Usually preventable by the driver
 - c. Chargeable to the shipper
 - d. The most costly type of accident
 - e. All of the above
6. Most backing accidents are the result of:
 - a. Not checking to confirm the areas behind and to the sides of the vehicle are free of obstacles
 - b. Using guides who don't know what signals to use
 - c. Swinging trailer doors not being latched securely
 - d. Cargo shifting while backing
 - e. None of the above
7. What backing maneuver generally presents the highest degree of danger?
 - a. Backing over a curb
 - b. Backing down a narrow alley
 - c. Backing across a busy roadway or highway
 - d. Backing without a guide
8. Planning your backing maneuver includes:
 - a. Positioning the vehicle to back from the driver's side
 - b. Getting out and looking before you back up
 - c. Selecting reference points when backing over longer distances
 - d. Rolling down your window to improve visibility and your ability to hear
 - e. All of the above
9. What is the best way to indicate you are planning to back up?
 - a. Wave a red flag
 - b. Flash your headlights
 - c. Activate four-way flashers and honk your horn
 - d. None of the above
10. Maintaining self-control while backing:
 - a. Is foolish when others are taking advantage
 - b. Allows you to stay in control of the situation
 - c. Is a quality of a professional driver
 - d. Both b and c
 - e. None of the above

Quiz: Answer key

TARP: PREVENTING BACKING ACCIDENTS

1. The best way to prevent a backing accident is to:
d. All of the above
2. Backing accidents account for approximately what percentage of commercial vehicle accidents?
b. 30 percent
3. GOAL stands for:
d. Get Out And Look
4. When possible, backing should always be done:
b. From the driver's side
5. Backing accidents are:
b. Usually preventable by the driver
6. Most backing accidents are the result of:
a. Not checking to confirm the areas behind and to the sides of the vehicle are free of obstacles
7. What backing maneuver generally presents the highest degree of danger?
c. Backing across a busy roadway or highway
8. Planning your backing maneuver includes:
e. All of the above
9. What is the best way to indicate you are planning to back up?
c. Activate four-way flashers and honk your horn
10. Maintaining self-control while backing:
d. Both b and c