

Loss control



Backing safely

Approximately 30% of all truck accidents occur when backing. While the majority of these accidents result in property damage to buildings, structures, or other vehicles, bodily injury and fatalities can occur. The high frequency of backing accidents is primarily due to the large blind spots to the side and rear of the truck. The best means of preventing backing accidents is to only back when necessary; if you have the option, don't back. Backing accidents often occur when drivers become complacent and do not take the time to follow backing best practices, such as those described below.



For best visibility, back from the driver's side if you cannot back straight.

Backing best practices

1. Turn off your radio and open your window—you need to be listening for other vehicles or for others who may be directing you to stop.
2. Stop distracting activities—hang up your cell phone, put down your sandwich, etc.
3. Position your truck to back straight if possible—this reduces blind spots.
4. Back from the driver's side for best visibility if you cannot back straight.
5. Get out and look (GOAL) to ensure a clear path.
6. Sound your horn and use your hazard flashers—this lets others around you know you will be moving.
7. Check both mirrors frequently—watch for other vehicles or people moving into the area you are backing into.
8. If conditions change while backing, GOAL again.

GOAL

Get out and look (GOAL) is a procedure every professional driver should conduct each time he or she backs. This is the only valid means of ensuring the area you are backing into is clear. Drivers should assess overhead clearance (overhangs, drain pipes, power lines, etc.) as well as the width of the area to be backed into. If conditions change while backing, the driver should get out and look again. **GOAL—it only takes a few minutes!**



Difficult locations

When backing into congested locations or backing long distances, the procedure should be conducted in stages or with the help of a spotter. A best practice for backing in stages involves picking landmarks to back to in each stage. Landmarks could include points on buildings or storage piles. Drivers can also create their own landmarks by placing a glove or other temporary marker on the ground at the first point they want to back to. Typically the marker is placed where



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the rear wheel should stop. Once there, the driver then repositions the marker at the next point and continues this process for each stage. At each stage the driver evaluates the next area to move into for adequate clearances and potential hazards.

If using a **spotter** to assist with backing, the following rules must be observed:

- The driver and spotter must agree on hand signals.
- The spotter must choose a position that is visible to the driver at all times, and never be directly behind the truck's path.
- If the driver loses sight of the spotter, he or she must immediately stop backing and only continue when the spotter is visible.



Agree on hand signals and stop if you lose sight of the spotter.

For additional loss control assistance, contact the E&S/Specialty Loss Control Department at Nationwide: toll-free at 855-255-3790 or email us at LCHELP@nationwide.com.

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LC-108 (5-17)

