Vehicle Backing Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

BACKING UP IS A RISK

A driver’s field of vision is very limited when backing up a vehicle. Blind spots are the areas around the vehicle that cannot be seen by either looking directly with your eyes or by using your mirrors. Blind spots will vary from vehicle to vehicle, but generally they are to the:

- Rear – directly behind the vehicle.
- Side – the side of the vehicle that the mirrors do not see.
- Front – directly in front of the vehicle that is hidden from the driver by the hood and fenders.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Severe consequences may result from improper/ unsafe backing

- Backing into a fixed object, moving object and/or person
- Backing over a fixed object, moving object and/or person
- Pinning a person
- Backing accidents cause 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

SOLUTIONS TO SAFE BACKING

- Install rear-vision camera systems in vehicles to eliminate 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.
- No amount of forward-driving experience can help a driver with backing a truck or other vehicles. All drivers need practice, practice, practice in safe surroundings until they

become familiar with the way the vehicle backs up compared to the direction the steering wheel is turned.

- Create and support a company-wide training program. The program should include a driver's course to teach and review backing techniques, as well as covering equipment usage, hand signals, dangers to avoid, and other risk-lowering topics.
- Assign workers (signallers) to direct the movement and operation of vehicles and motorized equipment.
- Educate and train the signallers in the skills they need to perform this task.
- Before work begins, drivers and signallers must know the hand signals and their meaning.
- A signaller must:
    - make sure that (s)he has visual contact with the driver when a vehicle is in motion,
    - keep a clear view of the path the vehicle is travelling, and watch the vehicle and load as it moves,
    - be aware of any other persons or vehicles entering the area and be able to warn them of any hazards,
    - not have other duties to do while acting as a signaller,
    - wear high-visibility apparel, and wear appropriate equipment when working at low-light conditions, and
    - not be distracted while performing these duties (e.g., no use of mobile devices or personal earphones).

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Drivers/operators and signallers must be educated and trained to:
    - recognize hazards.
    - know the locations of blind spots.
    - know the meaning of the hand signals.
    - know how the vehicle behaves/moves when reversing.
    - stop when they have any doubt about the safety of a person or to an object.
    - always back up at a slow pace.

- Drivers must stop immediately if they lose visual contact with the signaller.
- All other workers must be aware of the hazards associated with moving vehicles, especially when backing up. and know how to protect themselves by:
    - wearing high-visibility apparel.
    - always making eye contact with the driver when approaching the vehicle.
    - showing or signalling their intentions to the driver or signaller.
    - being alert for any back up alarms or signals.
    - not working within a vehicle's blind spots.
    - not standing or walking in areas where vehicles are moving.

BEST BACKING UP TIPS

- **Think ahead.** Drivers should not put themselves in an unnecessary backing situation.
- **Park defensively.** Drivers choose an easy-exit parking space, like pull-through or where no one else is parked.
- **Know your vehicle's blind spots.** Drivers need to remember that mirrors never give the whole picture while backing. In a medium-sized truck, blind spots can extend up to 16 feet in front and 160 feet behind the vehicle.
- **Do a walk-around.** Before entering your vehicle do a walk-around. This gives you a firsthand view of the backing area and any limitations.
- **Know your clearances.** While performing your walk-around also check for obstructions, low hanging eaves and tree limbs, wires, and any other potential clearance-related obstacles.
- **Alley parking is a special circumstance.** If an alley doesn't permit driving all the way through or room to turn around, you should back into it (if ordinances permit) so when leaving you can pull forward into the street rather than backing blindly out into the street.
- **Use a spotter.** Have another person help when backing. The driver and spotter should use hand signals instead of verbal instructions. Do not allow the spotter to be positioned

directly behind your vehicle or walk backwards behind you while giving instructions.

- **Every backing situation is new and different.** Sometimes a driver visits the same location several times a day. The driver should be watchful each visit for changes and new obstacles (new vehicles, trash cans, people, etc.)
- **Drivers sometimes must spot for themselves.** They need to return to the vehicle and start backing within a few seconds after finishing their walk-around.

FINAL WORD

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) reports the most common type of vehicle accident is a backing accident. Due to limited vision out of the back windows or around long truck beds and equipment bodies, drivers may not see other vehicles, obstacles, or even coworkers and pedestrians.