

Best Practices for Backing Vehicles Safely

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- Backing safely can be a simple operation with proper training, equipment and communication. We have seen a recent increase in the number of claims in which improper backing has caused an accident.
- These collisions are avoidable/preventable and while most only involve simple property damage, some lead to very serious injuries or even tragic fatalities
- http://www.njmel.org/images/Safety/Safety_Bulletins_Checklists/SD_Bulletin_Backing_Fire_Vehicles_Sep_2014.pdf
- The National Safety Council estimates that 1 out of 4 accidents involves improper backing.
- There are a number of things you can do to mitigate the hazards of backing vehicles.
- Use a spotter every time. Larger vehicles have larger blind spots. That is not always convenient for smaller vehicles.
- Install back-up sensors, cameras and warning chimes
- Make sure all back-up sensors, cameras and warning chimes are working correctly.
- The driver should do a walk around.
- Extend the painted lines further out to help guide the driver.



Examples;

- Volunteer fireman misjudged side clearance backing a fire truck into the station causing \$11,500 in damages.
- DPW employee backing a 21 person passenger bus into the DPW garage and scraped the side of the bus and the garage causing \$13,000 in damages combined.
- DPW truck performing cleanup after a storm and backed into a woman causing fatal injuries. The backup warning alarms were not working so no audible warning existed. There were 2 employees in the cab and one could have acted as a spotter. The claim was well over \$3 million dollars with expenses, legal costs and the payment to the claimant's family.



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