



BACKING SAFELY

One out of every four accidents can be blamed on poor backing techniques. The cost of “Property Damage Crash” (a typical backing up accident) is presently estimated at an average of \$7,400 per event. – National Safety Council

Unfortunately, backing accidents continue to happen and they are frustrating for everyone

FOCUS

Your attention must be 100% committed to this task. Minimize distractions (turn off music or talk radio so that you can hear what’s happening around your vehicle). These collisions are avoidable/preventable and while most only involve simple property damage, some lead to very serious injuries or even tragic fatalities.

ANTICIPATE

Think in advance. Drivers should not put themselves into unnecessary backing situations. Check for proper mirror adjustment. Using the **Smith System Key #1 and #2, Key #1 Aim High in Steering** – Choose the safest location possible. Think about your departure upon arrival. **Key #2, Get The Big Picture** – Search for all potential hazards.

CORRECT

Park defensively. Drivers must choose easy-exit parking spaces that do not crowd neighboring vehicles and park their vehicle in the center of the parking space. G.O.A.L. – Get Out and Look. Walking around a vehicle gives a driver a firsthand view of the backing area and any limitations. They can check for children, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards, and other dangers. When performing a walk-around, drivers can check for obstructions, low-hanging trees and wires, and any other potential clearance-related problems. Also, check your travel path for proper clearances, especially when backing into a building. Make sure the door is open all the way. Once the driver returns to the vehicle, start backing within a few seconds after finishing the walk-around. This will allow very little time for people and/or obstacles to change behind the vehicle. Use **Smith System Key #3, Keep Your Eyes Moving** – Scan the area consistently, do not forget about the lateral movement of the front of the truck. We sometime times lose focus of the front of the truck, more concerned with what is happening behind and to the sides of our vehicle. **Smith System Key #4, Leave Yourself an Out** – Surround yourself with space. You cannot back into what is not there. **Smith System Key #5, Make Sure They See You** – Use your warning devices, seek eye contact. Once you have established eye to eye contact, you can assume the other driver will act in a reasonable and predictable manner. Back up slowly to allow other vehicles and pedestrians, who may have unexpectedly approached, to safely move away.

TALK

Every backing situation is new and different. Sometimes a driver visits the same location several times a day and should be watchful each visit for changes and any new obstacles. Share with your fellow drivers any information that may help them avoid a backing collision or changes in a location that may create unique backing obstacles.