



Backing Up a Rig

Backing up a small sports car and backing up a large tractor trailer require vastly different levels of experience and skill.

Backing up a large vehicle is a fact of life for many professional drivers. A large number of injuries and damages are sustained in the motor vehicle transportation industry as a result of poor backing procedures. Here are some ideas that can help you avoid backing accidents.

- **Avoid backing if possible.** There are many occasions when backing is not absolutely necessary. Try to park your vehicle so you do not have to back.
- **Back to the driver's side (left) only if at all possible.** This provides the driver with a clearer view of his trailer and helper.
- **Back the shortest distance possible.** The farther you have to back the vehicle, the greater the possibility of a collision with some object or person.
- **Avoid backing into traffic whenever possible.** This is fairly self-explanatory. A motorist may not see your vehicle coming towards him. The distance and time are shortened dramatically by two moving objects closing toward each other.
- **Try not to back around an intersection or the corner of a structure.** This is blind backing. If you are operating by yourself, you cannot tell how the situation may have changed.
- **If you are backing up and you have a partner in the rig, have that person get out and assist in directing you.** Agree on hand signals before you start the maneuver. Make sure you can see the person directing you on the ground. If not, stop the vehicle!
- **Walk around the vehicle before backing.** Look over your path of travel to see that it is clear. Look for children or pets/animals in the area. You may have to walk around several times during a difficult maneuver (if alone). It is cheaper to get out and check your progress than it is to pay for the property damages/injuries.
- **Check the trailer doors that they are closed.** Hook up the glad hands and lock the slider pins into place.
- **With both tractor and trailer air brakes disengaged, back up.** Do not go heavy on the accelerator or ride the clutch.
- Remember the rig is extremely long. It has a very wide turning radius and the tail moves in the opposite direction of your steering. Do not over-steer and watch the mirrors closely.

