

Every time vehicles or equipment are going in reverse there is a new opportunity for a dangerous back over or struck-by incident.

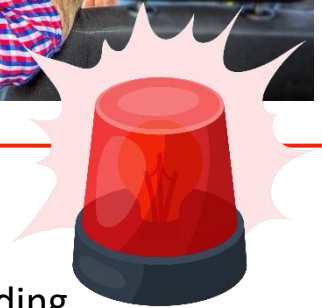
- Drivers may drive the same vehicles, operate the same equipment, or back out of the same spot every day, but new hazards can arise and it's important that drivers never become complacent.



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Back-up alarms are common but may not be required on every large vehicle.

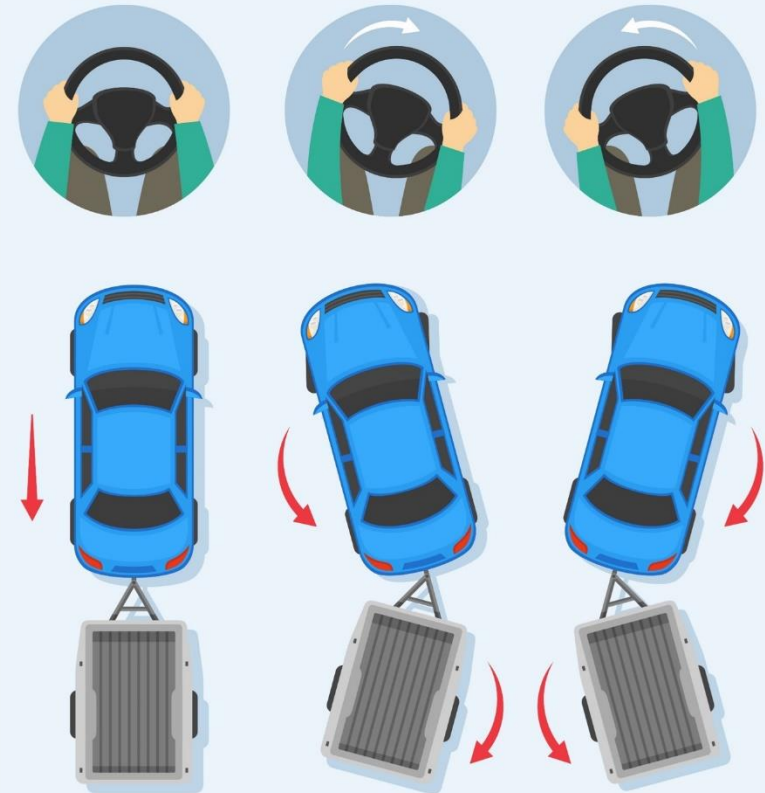
- On construction site vehicles that have an obstructed view to the rear, OSHA requires reverse signal alarms that are loud enough to be heard above the surrounding noise level. If the vehicle has an obstructed view to the rear and no alarm, a spotter must be used.
- There is no OSHA requirement for back-up alarms on forklifts, but if an alarm was installed as part of the original design, it can not be disabled or removed.
- State OSHA requirements may be stricter or more specific when it comes to reverse signal alarms. For organizations under a State OSHA plan, refer to the state standards regarding back-up alarms.



When backing up any vehicle follow these basic steps:

1. **Adjust Mirrors.** Before moving the vehicle check the rearview and side mirrors and adjust them. The goal is to make the blind spots as small as possible, so you have the most visibility when backing up. If available in the vehicle, rear-vision cameras provide added visibility, but drivers should not depend solely on the camera.
2. **Look Back.** Drivers should turn to the right and look out the back window so they can see in the direction the vehicle is moving. Continually check all mirrors while in reverse.
3. **Reverse Slowly.** Drive in a careful and controlled manner throughout the back-up maneuver. It is more difficult to maintain steering control when backing a vehicle so accelerate slowly.
4. **Steer Properly.** When backing up without a trailer, turn the steering wheel in the direction the rear of the vehicle should go. When backing up a vehicle with a trailer attached, turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction the trailer should be moving.

BACKING UP WITH A TRAILER



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When possible, avoid driving in reverse unless it is necessary. To avoid backing up, there is some planning that needs to happen when you are parking the vehicle.

- Choose pull-through parking spaces when they are available.
- Consider backing into a parking spot upon arrival, which can be safer than backing out of it when leaving.
- Select a parking space that provides for an easy exit that is away from other obstacles and is not likely to become crowded with other vehicles.
- If parking a vehicle in a parking lot with designated spots, park in the center of the parking space.
- For alley parking, remember that vehicles should not be reversing out of an alley into a busy roadway. Before parking, ensure that when exiting the alley, the vehicle can 1) pull through the alley to the other side, or 2) turn around in the alley. If not, back the vehicle up into the alley to allow for a safe forward exit.



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Before backing up, especially when driving larger vehicles, it's always a good idea to complete a walk-around first.

- **Look up** for hanging tree branches, electrical wires, or anything else above the vehicle that could hit or get snagged on the vehicle. Know the clearance you need for the vehicle you are driving.
- **Look around** and scan for pedestrians, trees, buildings, poles, or other obstacles.
- **Look down** and notice the ground conditions to check for soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards, or animals.

No matter what the vehicle is – a car, forklift, truck, heavy equipment, or a vehicle pulling a trailer – it is important for every driver who may be unsure of their backing ability to take time to practice in a safe zone.

- Get to know the vehicle you are driving, how it handles, and its blind spots.



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- On job sites with moving vehicles and heavy equipment all workers should be wearing high-visibility clothing like safety vests or jackets.
- When possible, create (and use!) separate paths for pedestrians and equipment and make sure those travel routes remain clearly marked.
- Traffic control plans specific to the work site can be created in such a way that creates routes for that minimize the need for vehicles to drive in reverse.



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As the driver or equipment operator, consider the following safety precautions anytime you put the vehicle into reverse:

- Avoid distractions – backing up requires concentration and demands your full attention.
- Use an experienced spotter if you do not have full view of the path of travel and potential hazards. Agree on hand signals before starting and keep the spotter in sight at all times while they are guiding.
- Do not assume that people will notice the vehicle is moving. Often pedestrians are distracted or looking in a different direction and will not notice that a vehicle is starting to back up. If you see someone in your path of travel, stop and wait.
- Increase the vehicle's visibility if you can – turn on the hazard lights, honk the horn, or ensure the back-up alarm is working (if required).
- Back the vehicle up slowly, cover the brake while in reverse, and keep the backing distance to a minimum.
- Remain calm and do not hesitate to start over if you need to get a better angle. Take as many attempts as you need to, even if traffic is stopped or others are waiting, to complete the reverse maneuver safely.

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