



How to Back Safely

These general guidelines are provided as a service to the transportation industry by Protective Insurance. Other backing situations may require additional procedures.

REMEMBER WHEN BACKING:

Never back while talking on a two-way radio or cell phone. Turn off radios, heater, air conditioner fans, etc., so you can hear what is going on around you.

GOAL: Get Out And Look prior to backing.

Check the area for uneven surfaces, potholes, fixed objects and debris. Any uneven surface can be enough to cause the trailer top to strike a close object.

Make sure your travel path is clear of all obstructions along the sides and overhead. Check for awnings, ladders, standpipes, overhead wires, etc.

Secure your trailer's swinging doors.

Situate your vehicle in the best possible position to begin backing. Set up your approach so you can back using your sight side (driver's side) and minimize the amount of turning.

Warn others you are beginning to back by telling them in person or by using your horn, four-way flashers, backup alarm and/or by placing reflective triangles around your truck to alert approaching traffic where appropriate.

USE THESE GUIDELINES DURING BACKING:

Back slowly. Use the lowest possible gear, or idle speed, and do not accelerate.

Be aware of hazards, such as pedestrians or other vehicles, which might move into your backing path.

Use a helper to block traffic if necessary.

If you must back around a corner, stop, **get out and check what is around the corner.**

When backing a long distance, **get out to recheck your path frequently.**

Use a reliable, well-trained guide (or spotter) whenever possible. Establish the hand signals you will communicate with, especially the "STOP" signal. The guide should be able to see the rear of the truck, the travel path (especially the passenger side) and you. Always keep the guide in sight. If any part of the guide disappears, stop immediately until you can completely see the guide again. Never let the guide stand between the rear of the trailer and what you are backing to. The guide should wear a reflective vest. At night, the guide should also carry a traffic control flashlight.

Remember, you remain responsible for safely backing your vehicle, even if a guide is used.