



Idealease Safety Bulletin

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Backing Accident Prevention

Backing accidents have for years been the highest frequency accidents with the lowest severity in the industry. However, the exposure as with any type of accident always exists for a fatality, injury and physical damage.

Drivers should adhere to the following safe backing procedures to prevent backing collisions:

- Always conduct a thorough pre-trip inspection. Check the vehicle's brakes, horn, back-up lights, 4-way flashers and back-up alarm (if equipped) for proper working condition. If equipped with a back-up device such as a video camera, make sure the lens is clean. Clean windows and mirrors thoroughly to provide a clear view.
- Plan ahead and avoid backing whenever possible. Do not put yourself into unnecessary backing situations. When practical, park the vehicle so it will not have to be backed at a later time. If you learn your routes, you may be able to avoid certain backing situations. Drive around the block and approach your stop again if necessary.
- Get to know the vehicle's blind spots. Drivers need to remember that mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing.
- Adjust mirrors for maximum visibility. Mirrors are a major key to any backing maneuver. Adjust your mirrors while the tractor and trailer are in a perfectly straight line and you are sitting in the driver's seat in your normal comfortable sitting position. Get help adjusting the right side mirror.
- Never back a vehicle when any mirror is covered with dirt, frost, snow or other substances that keep you from visually clearing the path the vehicle will take.
- Park defensively. Carefully survey the parking opportunities when you arrive at the delivery site. If possible, choose an easy-exit parking space that does not crowd neighboring vehicles. Too often, drivers pull into the most convenient location in order to speed up the delivery process. Sometimes, choosing a poor parking space is a matter of necessity, but in many cases, a better defensive position is available if you take the time to look and evaluate.
- Situate your vehicle in the best possible position before starting to back up. Make the turn on the driver's side, if possible, in order to minimize turning and allow you to see the back of the vehicle swinging into position.
- Plan your exit when parking in an alley. If an alley does not permit driving all the way through or room to turn around, then back into it (if local ordinances permit) so that when leaving, you can drive your vehicle forward into the street.
- Walk around your vehicle and check and recheck your path of travel. Before any attempt is made to back, always get out of your cab to look and see what lies between you and your backing destination. Check for workers, pedestrians, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards and equipment hazards. When backing long distances, it doesn't hurt to stop and recheck your path of travel. Don't forget to look up! Look for awnings, pipes, framing, fire escapes, wires, etc. that will be in your way. Look up, down, all around and under the truck before backing. The entire path the vehicle will take must be clear of obstacles. Are there

NEWS

COURT DENIES PUBLIC CITIZEN MOTION TO INVALIDATE HOS INTERIM FINAL RULE

Yesterday, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a terse order today denying Public Citizen's request to invalidate the recently issued hours-of-service (HOS) Interim Final Rule (IFR). Public Citizen claimed that the Court's prior decisions in the case effectively prohibited the agency from issuing an IFR that included an 11-hour daily driving time limit and a 34-hour restart provision. ATA, the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA), and shipper interests all filed briefs opposing the Public Citizen motion. Those filings highlighted the need for retention of the 11 and 34-hour provisions in an IFR to avoid significant disruptions to the industry and to law enforcement and the significant safety gains achieved under the current HOS rules. The decision means that the 11 and 34-hour provisions will remain in place pending further FMCSA consideration of a final HOS rule. The Court did expressly note that its denial of the motion did not preclude Public Citizen from challenging the IFR in a separate legal proceeding. However, such a proceeding would, even if expedited, take many months to pursue, with a final HOS rule likely to be issued before the litigation could be completed.

trash containers, wires, low-hanging trees, or other obstructions in or above your backing path? Anticipate where another vehicle or pedestrian could reach the rear of the vehicle while it is backing.

- Determine space limitations. Is the space wide enough? Is the loading dock platform high enough or low enough? Be aware that the path may slope up or down, making it difficult to judge vehicle clearance at your destination point. Measure and determine proper distances vertically and horizontally to safely park or unload your freight.
- Use a reliable guide when possible.
- Although ultimately the responsibility of backing safely falls on the driver, it is helpful to use a reliable, well-trained guide or spotter whenever possible to assist when backing. An extra set of eyes could make all the difference, particularly in situations where there are blind spots or when someone or something could come into your path. The driver and guide should use hand signals instead of verbal ones and make sure you understand each other's signals. Do not have the guide walking backwards while giving instructions. Establish eye contact with the guide before backing and keep the guide in sight at all times while backing. If you lose sight of the guide, STOP and determine where he/she is. Remind the guide to watch not only for the side and rear clearances, but also for overhead clearances and other overhangs as well.
- When you must spot for yourself without a guide, return to the vehicle quickly. Start backing within a few seconds after finishing the walk-around check. This will allow very little time for people and/or obstacles to move behind the vehicle.
- Measure and mark the distance carefully before backing. As you back into your space, get out of your truck and pace off the length of the space from the dock to the rear of the trailer. Then pace off the same distance from your driver's door back to the end of the trailer area. Place an object on the ground at this measurement point. Then as you back up, you will be at or near the dock when your driver's door reaches the object.
- Use your flashlight as a reference point. When backing at night or when backing into buildings or other enclosed structures during the day, lay your flashlight down at the end of your backing area. The flashlight will not light up the dark area, but the light will give you a reference point for which to aim.
- Once you are behind the wheel, with the engine running and the vehicle in reverse, check the area again by turning and visually clearing the path that the vehicle will take. Use all side mirrors to constantly check and visually clear your path.
- Use your 4-way flashers and back-up alarm (if equipped) and periodically tap your horn prior to backing and as you continue backing. These warning devices are designed to alert others of your presence and can make other drivers aware of your intentions. Assume that other vehicles or individuals do not see you coming.
- Back slowly and cautiously. Have complete control of your vehicle. Use the lowest possible gear or idle speed and do not accelerate.
- Remember that every backing situation is new and different. If you visit the same location several times a day or each week, be watchful each visit.

Upcoming Idealease Safety Seminars

January 31st

Salt Lake City, UT

Contact:

Todd Stapley

Lake City Idealease

801-977-9333

February 12th

Santa Fe Springs, CA

Contact:

John Barbour

Westran Idealease

Idealease of Los Angeles

562-404-1020

February 13th

Pleasanton, CA

Contact:

Dave Angotti

BIT Idealease

Riverview Idealease

408-453-7802