

# DRIVER LETTER

A monthly message for drivers from the Risk Engineering Organization of The Hartford  
January 2024



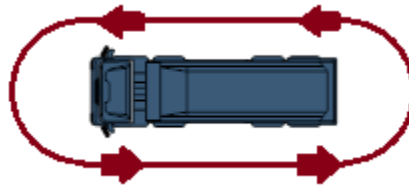
## PREVENTING BACKING COLLISIONS

Dear Driver:

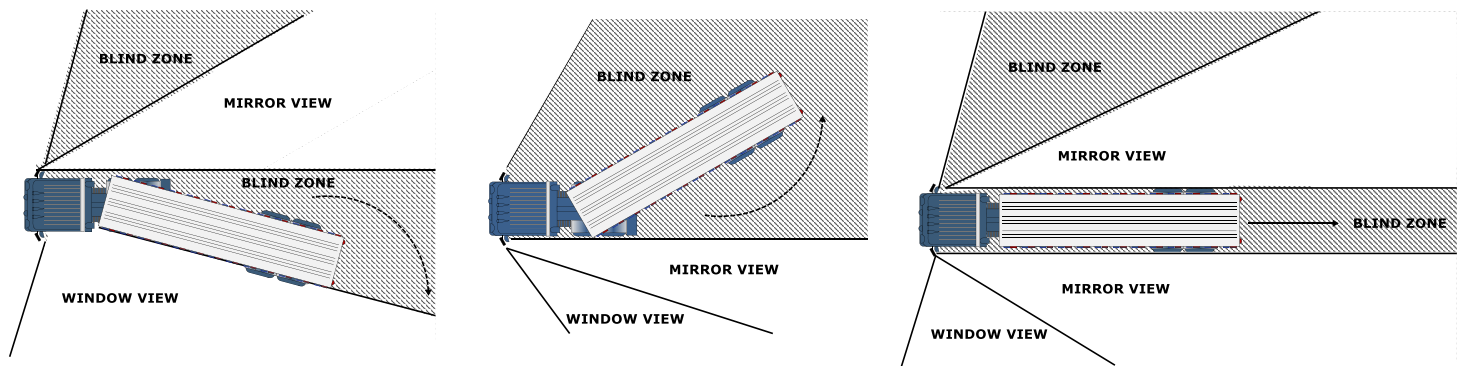
In most fleets 25% or one in four collisions is related to backing. The percentage even runs higher for certain fleets including delivery and service operations. The reason for the high collision frequency is limited visibility. In every case, a backing collision ruins a driver's safety record because backing collisions are **Preventable**.

Whether you drive a private passenger type vehicle or a tractor trailer, the best rule of thumb is to avoid backing. Look at your route and eliminate as much backing as possible. However, if you find it necessary to back, follow these five rules:

1. **Get out and get the whole picture** – Many professionals use the term **G.O.A.L. or Circle Check**, which means Get Out and Look. Walk around your vehicle to examine the area into which you must back and then start backing *immediately*. Be sure to check clearances behind, above (know the height of your vehicle), below and to the sides of your vehicle. Sound your horn before backing.



2. **Back from the driver's side** – backing from the driver's left helps reduce the blind zone. The illustrations below identify the blind zones when to the left, Right (blind side) and straight back. It may be necessary to drive around the block to position the vehicle.



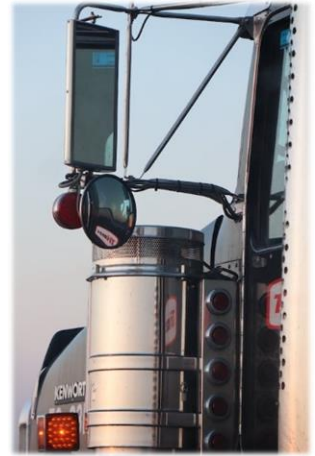
3. **Back slowly** – allows you to maintain control of your vehicle.
4. **Check all sides as you back** – don't depend entirely on mirrors because objects may be closer than they appear. Don't depend entirely on rear view cameras and or sensors (if equipped). Get out and take a look  $\frac{3}{4}$  through the backing maneuver, pace the distance between the vehicle and the desired stopping point, mark a guide/spot on the ground an equal distance from the driver's seat, then continue backing. When you reach the mark, stop backing.



5. **Use a reliable guide** - instruct the guide to watch the area you will be moving into and keep an eye on your blind zone. A guide should stand on the driver's side so they can see both you and the rear of your vehicle. Make sure you agree on hand signals to be used before you begin to back. STOP if you lose sight of your guide.

Additional rules to remember are:

- Never assume that the path is clear unless it can be seen – or unless a guide can verify that it's clear.
- Never back around a corner or into traffic – Drive around the block to avoid this dangerous maneuver.
- Don't back out of driveways or alleys – A defensive driver will drive into the alley, turn around and drive out head first. If not possible to turn around, the skilled driver will back into the alley to eliminate the need to back out.
- Adjust your mirrors properly.
- Keep mirrors, sensors and cameras clean.
- Locate a parking stall to pull through to park.



**Check and Look - Prevent Backing Collisions!**

Resources:

1. "Guide for Determining Preventability of Motor Vehicle Accidents," National Safety Council, [nsc.org](http://nsc.org)
2. "Motor Vehicle Fleet Conference, Backing." Dec 2023, The Hartford, Risk Engineering.
3. "Driver Assistance Technologies." NHTSA, NHTSA, 27 Nov. 2023, [www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/driver-assistance-technologies](http://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/driver-assistance-technologies).
4. "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR." Occupational Safety and Health Administration, [www.osha.gov/doc/topics/backover/spotter.html](http://www.osha.gov/doc/topics/backover/spotter.html).

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