Safety Matters

Backing Up Safely in Your Vehicle

Backing up a vehicle, whether it is an automobile or large truck, can be a difficult task with a lot of dangers involved. In fact, many accidents occur when vehicles are backing up at only 5 mph or less, due to blind spots, poor planning and lack of skill.

Tips for Safety

When employees can avoid backing up, they should do so. Otherwise, have them follow these safety tips:

- Back up slowly and never hurry through the process. Keep the vehicle in control at all times.

- If you have doubts about what is behind you or if space is too tight, do not back up.

- Make use of your rear-view mirrors and rear window before and during the process; don't open your door to look behind you.

- Back up only as far as needed and then proceed forward to move the vehicle the rest of the way.

- Back in and then drive out going forward when parking in a lot.

- If you are in a blind spot, beep your horn twice or sound your backup alarm before backing.

- Watch out for overhead power lines or any other obstructions that you may come in contact with.

- Do not back around corners or exit ramps on the freeway.

- Walk around the entire vehicle looking for hazards and remove them if necessary.

Spotters

Advise employees to strongly consider using a spotter when backing their vehicle. When using a spotter, they should follow these general rules:

- Make contact with your spotter at all times. If you cannot hear and see him or her, do not back up until you can.

- Agree on hand signals that the spotter will use to signal you to back up and stop.

- Ask the spotter to walk around the vehicle and survey the backing area to check for hazards. Have him or her check your overhead clearance as well.

- Make sure the spotter is at least 8 feet away from the vehicle before you begin to back up.