

# Vehicle Backing Safety

## CLAIMS BRIEF



Issue No. 21

Summer 2001

### Tips to Reduce Vehicle Backing Accidents

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The National Safety Council reports that one out of every four accidents is caused by poor backing techniques. Backing accidents often result in costly damage to vehicles, equipment and buildings, and may even cause serious injury and death.

A recent review of auto claims reported to the Trust shows that, for the last three years, vehicle backing has been the most frequent cause of damage to our Members' vehicles. The Claims Department received about 63 claims per year with an average cost of \$1,600 per claim.

Backing accidents are preventable. Remind your drivers that they can control parking and backing as effectively as other vehicle maneuvers. Most backing accidents occur because drivers fail to exercise caution. Often, they rely too heavily on vehicle mirrors and ignore blind spots. To help reduce the number of backing accidents, make drivers become familiar with these prevention measures.

- Select parking locations where backing will not be necessary. A backing accident will be prevented if a vehicle can be driven forward.
- Avoid making "Y" turns in driveways or roads.
- If possible, choose a parking location away from moving or parked vehicles.
- Avoid parking too close to a corner, driveway, construction site, or in a place where your vehicle will crowd other vehicles.

When backing is unavoidable, take the following precautions:

- Walk around the vehicle to check for children, other vehicles or obstacles.
- Back slowly.
- Back and turn toward the driver's side whenever possible.

The Maryland Driver's Handbook, produced and distributed by The Maryland Department of Transportation, suggests that heavy equipment

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operators use helpers as often as they can. The helper should stand near the back of the vehicle in sight of the driver or the driver's mirrors, and use hand signals familiar to both the driver and helper to assist the driver in backing safely. Heavy equipment operators are not relieved of safe backing responsibility even when a helper is involved. Remind heavy equipment operators of these backing precautions:

- Sound the horn to warn others that the vehicle is about to back up.
- Before backing, survey the area and note any obstructions and provide the helper with adequate instructions.
- Back the vehicle slowly, following the helper's direction.
- Back and turn toward the driver's side.

Remember, all backing accidents are preventable. A reduction of backing accidents will help keep your vehicles on the road, out of the repair shop, and working for you. Like all aspects of vehicular safety, supervisors should review and emphasize the importance of safe backing procedures with their drivers.

LGIT offers the approved National Safety Council defensive driving course should any of your drivers need to brush up on backing or other driving skills. The next course is scheduled for August 22, 2001. Contact Jennifer Myers, Loss Control Training Coordinator, at 1-800-673-8231 for more information on the course. ■

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