



Backing Over

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LENGTH 2–5 minutes

TO PREPARE Read the background information.

Review and bring the company’s policy on backing and spotters for reference.

BACKGROUND

- According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, about 210 fatalities occur every year when a vehicle backs over a person.
- The use of safe backing vehicle tips as well as technology and effective use of spotters, can help prevent crashes while on the job.

DISCUSSION

Play the following video from OSHA:

https://www.osha.gov/dts/vtools/construction/struck_by_backover_fnl_eng_web.html



What are some effective ways technology is helping drivers avoid the dangers of backing over?

- **Cameras:** OSHA states that most vehicles can accommodate a camera to provide drivers with a view of the rear and other blind spots. When equipping vehicles with cameras, it is important to consider the environment operations work in. Some constructions sites and mines may require more rugged cameras, and vehicles such as dump trucks may need two or more cameras to monitor blind spots.
- **Proximity detection systems:** These systems use radar and ultrasonic technology to bounce a signal off an object. The system then alerts the vehicle operator with a visual or audio warning that an object is in its way.

However, these systems are only useful when they can be heard and when used with an Internal Traffic Control Plan. Spotters also play a key role in ensuring safe communications on a worksite.



TRAFFIC SAFETY HUDDLE



What is a spotter, and what are some do's and don'ts for using one safely?

- A spotter is another person who can help a driver with backing.
- The driver and the spotter should use hand signals instead of verbal ones and make sure they understand each other's signals.
- Ensure spotters always have visual contact with the driver when a vehicle is in motion. If the driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she should stop moving the vehicle immediately.
- A spotter should never be walking backwards while giving instructions.
- A spotter should not be given additional duties while spotting.
- A spotter should not be using a mobile device or headphones while spotting.
- Spotters should be provided high-visibility clothing.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Internal traffic control plan: Create a plan to coordinate the flow of moving equipment, workers, and vehicles to help minimize the number of times workers and vehicles cross paths. According to OSHA, these plans can significantly reduce and even eliminate the need for vehicles to back up on a jobsite.

If your company already has an internal traffic control plan, that's great! Allow for extra time to review it with your drivers. Ask for their input, and discuss any recent events or examples that might include the use of your company's internal traffic control plan.

SUMMARY

- When backing, you want to use all systems available—mirrors, cameras, sensors, and spotters. But you don't want to become too reliable on one over the other.
- Spotters are a great tool for avoiding backing over objects or people, but only when used carefully. Drivers and spotters need to plan ahead, figure out the best way to communicate, and make that communication the top priority when the vehicle is in motion.