

# Safe Backing Procedures for Tractor-Trailers



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Ensuring safety while backing a tractor-trailer is a critical aspect of preventing accidents and protecting people and property. Due to the size and visibility limitations of large trucks, backing can be particularly challenging. However, by adhering to established safe backing practices, we can significantly reduce the risk of collisions, damage, and injuries.

### **Key Safe Backing Practices:**

**Assess the Situation:** Before attempting to back the tractor-trailer, always assess the area for any obstacles, pedestrians, or other vehicles. This simple step will give you a clear understanding of the environment and any potential hazards. If you can't see an area clearly, GET OUT AND LOOK. Walk around your truck.

1. **Use Spotters When Possible:** Always ask for help when necessary. Spotters are invaluable in guiding drivers during backing maneuvers. Make sure the spotter is visible to you and establish clear communication signals before proceeding. Big hand gestures work best. It is very difficult to see someone motioning with only their fingers when they are 60' away. Note, though a spotter is used, you are responsible for anything you hit with your vehicle. So again, if you

question a spotter, GET OUT AND LOOK. Also, even when using a spotter, it is always best to GET OUT AND LOOK.

2. **Go Slow and Steady:** Backing a tractor-trailer is not a race. Use slow, deliberate movements and take your time to ensure the trailer moves smoothly into position. Quick, jerky motions can increase the risk of accidents. Bumping the dock gently is the sign of a true professional and prevents damage and freight movement. Remember, GET OUT AND LOOK.
3. **Use Your Mirrors Effectively:** Continuously use your side mirrors to monitor the trailer's movement. Proper mirror adjustment is essential to maintaining full visibility around the vehicle. Also, make sure your mirrors are clean to ensure maximum visibility. If there is ever a point while backing that you do not know exactly where your trailer is, GET OUT AND LOOK.
4. **Be Aware of your Blind Spots:** Be aware of the blind spots around the tractor-trailer, particularly behind the vehicle. If you cannot see a certain area, don't proceed until you have a clear view or assistance from a spotter. Also, it is common for other vehicles to try and sneak by you while you are backing. Be aware of other vehicles in the area and **Always** remember to GET OUT AND LOOK.

Remember, safe backing is essential not only for protecting equipment but also for preventing injuries to other workers, pedestrians, and the public. Every driver is responsible for taking the time and effort necessary to back safely, no matter how experienced they are.

**Please take a moment to review the following questions to ensure your understanding of safe backing procedures.**

1. What is a major step you can take to avoid an accident while backing?

When backing a tractor-trailer, how fast should you move?

- As fast as possible to complete the task quickly
- At a steady pace but faster than usual driving speed
- Slowly and steadily, taking your time
- Only stop when you feel the trailer is in place

Print Name

Signature



Date