

PARKING AND BACKING BASICS

YOUR DECISIONS DRIVE YOUR SAFETY



KNOW THE RISKS

Parking lot incidents are typically low-speed collisions, but they can still lead to expensive repair bills. More importantly, they can be fatal if a pedestrian—particularly a child—is involved.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), **20% of all reported vehicle crashes occur in parking lots**. Since many parking lot collisions involve only property damage, many often go unreported, so the real number is most likely much higher.

For fleets, parking lot crashes are one of the most commonly occurring types of incidents. Safe parking and backing is an important basic for all driver groups to master. For example, teen drivers in your family also need to understand parking because when you consider the types of places where teens are frequently driving to such as school, shopping malls, and movie theaters, it stands to reason that they spend a lot of time in parking lots.

KNOW THE FACTS



According to the April 2018 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts Report, **an estimated 95,000 people were injured and an estimated 2,125 people were killed in non-traffic crashes**. “Non-traffic” refers to anything that happens off public roads or highways, generally in parking lots or driveways.¹



According to Kids and Cars (a non-profit child safety advocacy group) **at least 50 children are backed over every week** in the U.S. In addition, from 2013-2017, **32% of child non-traffic fatalities were due to backovers**.²



All vehicles have blind zones—the area behind the vehicle that a person cannot see from the driver’s seat. The blind zone is affected by the length of the vehicle and the height of the driver. Pickups, SUVs and minivans have larger blind zones than passenger cars. KidsAndCars.org is calling for all agencies to formally adopt the use of the term “blind zone” rather than “blind spot” when describing the areas that cannot be seen by a driver when slowly backing up or moving forward in a vehicle.³

¹National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Traffic Safety Facts Report <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812515>

²KidsAndCars.org How Kids Get Hurt <https://www.kidsandcars.org/how-kids-get-hurt/backovers/>

³KidsAndCars.org Blind Zone Definition <https://www.kidsandcars.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Blind-zone-definition-FINAL.pdf>



TIPS FOR SAFE PARKING



1

Back in, not out. Where legal and where parking spaces are not angled, fleet safety experts agree it is safest to back into or pull through a parking space so your vehicle is facing out when it's time to exit.

2

Get the full picture. Having your mirrors properly adjusted for the best possible view is important for all driving maneuvers, but it is particularly so for safely backing into a parking space.

3

Get it straight. Once you've backed in, before exiting the vehicle, turn the wheel to straighten your tires so they are ready for you to drive out safely.

4

Embrace the walk. Pull-through spaces are more common in the outer areas of a parking lot. When possible and practical, take advantage of the ease of parking in a pull-through spot and walk the extra distance. Not only will your body benefit from the bonus physical activity, you'll be less likely to get a door ding.

5

Approach slowly. When pulling-through to a parking space, particularly if there is an SUV or van on either or both sides, go slowly and be alert for other drivers coming from the opposite side who may not see you and could be approaching the same spot. Exit with caution—when exiting from a parking space, go slowly and be aware of pedestrians and other vehicles. Moving slowly will also give others more time to see you.

6

We're all pedestrians. Remember, the moment you exit your vehicle, you become a pedestrian. Especially in parking lots, keep your head up and alert to your surroundings.

7

If you **MUST** back out:

Complete a vehicle walk-around to check for children and other objects before backing out. Once the walk-around is complete and all is clear, make your exit promptly and cautiously as conditions may change.

Some fleet programs recommend tapping the horn twice before backing to alert others of your intention.