

INTRODUCTION

When driving, there are times when drivers will have to reverse (i.e., back up). For some drivers, reversing can be a bit of a challenge because of obstacles around the vehicle, and angles that the driver will have to place the vehicle in to help avoid hitting anything. In this lesson we will cover why reversing can be a challenge, what can happen if you reverse improperly, and reversing tips that you can use.



WHY REVERSING CAN BE CHALLENGE

There are many reasons that both new and veteran drivers can find reversing to be a challenge. These include:

- The size of the vehicle
- Blind spots
- Towing trailers
- Obstacles in front of, behind, or besides the vehicle
- Tight spacing

WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN YOU IMPROPERLY REVERSE

When you reverse, you potentially could experience one or more of the following scenarios occur to you if you are not careful:

- Striking stationary objects.
 - Examples of stationary objects may include mailboxes, poles, fencing, etc.
- Hitting pedestrians who may be walking behind your vehicle.
- Reversing into another vehicle.



REVERSING TIPS

When reversing a vehicle, you should do the following to help minimize the chances of an accident occurring.

Remember to always wear your seatbelt while operating the vehicle.

Reversing From a Stationary Position

When reversing from a stationary position, such as from a parking spot or driveway, you should do the following:

- Walk behind your vehicle and make sure that the area around your vehicle is clear.
- Adjust both your side and rearview mirrors to help you see around you.
- Conduct a 360-degree check of the area around you before you start backing out of your stationary position.

Note: You should still do a 360-degree check even if you have a backup camera because while helpful, cameras are not a 100% guarantee that something isn't approaching from behind or the side.

- You should continue your 360-degree check throughout the reversing process because things around you can change quickly.
- Slowly reverse to help maintain control of the vehicle.
- Turn the steering wheel in the direction that you want the car to go in.
 - Trying to turn the steering wheel in the opposite direction can cause you to hit objects, pedestrians, or vehicles.
- Remember to straighten your tires once you have completed your maneuver.
 - Keeping your tires turned will keep your vehicle turning in the direction the tires are facing.



Reversing into a Parking Spot

When reversing into a parking spot, you should do the following:

- Choose an appropriately sized space for your vehicle.
 - Trying to squeeze your vehicle into a small space could cause damage to your or others' vehicles.
 - Depending on the vehicle, you may also want to get out and conduct a walk-around to help assure that you have identified all possible hazards or obstacles that may be around the vehicle before you begin reversing.
- Use your signal to inform other vehicles that may be behind you of your intentions.
- Get your vehicle in the correct angle for the space (45 degrees or 90 degrees) as reversing at the wrong angle could cause you to reverse into objects, people, or vehicles that may be near the space.
- Adjust your mirrors to help reverse into the space.
 - Mirrors can help you see how close or far away you are from the space and will allow you to make adjustments to your position as needed.
- Conduct a 360-degree check as you reverse.
 - Continue the check throughout the reversing process because it can help spot changes in conditions around your vehicle.
 - Do NOT solely rely on a backup camera.
- Slowly reverse because reversing at high speeds can cause you to lose control of the vehicle.
- Turn the steering wheel in the direction that you want the vehicle to go in.

- Remember to straighten your tires once you have completed your angles, otherwise your vehicle will continue in the direction the tires are facing.

Reversing with a Trailer

Reversing with a trailer can be more challenging because of how a trailer reacts when going backwards. When reversing with a trailer, you should do the following:

- Get out and look at the space that you are wanting to back into and the area around your vehicle and trailer for obstructions, hazards, pedestrians, etc.
 - Make sure that anything that needs to be secured, has been properly secured.
- Adjust your mirrors to help you see the trailer and the area behind your trailer.
 - You may also want to roll down your window to help in looking out of the vehicle and to communicate with others if needed.
- If you are going to be using a spotter, make sure that each of you understand hand signals that will be used to communicate while you reverse.
 - Miscommunication could result in an accident.
 - Also keep your spotter in your line of sight. If you can't see your spotter, stop and have the spotter readjust their position until you can see them.
- Get the vehicle in the proper position for the reversal maneuver.
 - To help with positioning, you may want to place your hand on the bottom of the steering wheel because it can be easier to make the trailer go to the left or right.
 - Remember, that depending on the size and angle of the trailer, it may go in the opposite direction of the vehicle because of how the trailer reacts to the vehicle's movements.
- Remember to use your right and left side mirrors while you reverse.
- Slowly reverse into the space to help you maintain control of the vehicle and trailer.
 - Reversing fast could cause an accident.
- Depending on your vehicle and trailer, you may need to get out a few times to check on your position.
- Straighten up as needed to make adjustments.
- Do NOT jackknife because this can damage both the trailer and your vehicle.

Note: When reversing with a semi-truck trailer, you should reverse in accordance with your company's policies and procedures. For information on backing into a dock, please refer to our "Driving: Backing into Docks" lesson.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, reversing is a necessary skill that all drivers use at one time or another. Reversing can be challenging for new and experienced drivers alike because of blind spots and other factors. Reversing in any vehicle should be done slowly to help you keep control of vehicle. If you can any questions about reversing in company vehicles, please speak with your supervisor.