



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Backing Up in a Motor Vehicle or Heavy Equipment Safety Message

Operating heavy equipment or a motor vehicle is inherently a hazardous task, however, backing up creates more risk for incidents to occur. According to the National Safety Council, backing accidents cause 500 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year. All too often, unnecessary backing is responsible for injuries or property damage incidents. It is important to consider the hazards of backing and what can be done to mitigate these hazards.

Hazards of Backing

With increased blind spots, backing leaves drivers and operators at more risk for error resulting in damage or injury. **The most serious incident occurring due to backing is fatalities of ground personnel.**

A few hazards include:

- Less visibility/ more blind spots
- Fixed objects
- Moving equipment or vehicles
- Uneven terrain

Best Practices and Safeguards to Mitigate the Hazards of Backing

1. The single best way to prevent backing-related incidents is to eliminate backing as much as possible.
2. Look for pull-through parking before choosing to park where your first move is backing up.
3. Perform a complete walk-around of your vehicle.
4. **Use a spotter**

Summary

Backing can almost always be eliminated or greatly reduced when proper pre-planning is used. Elimination should always be the first choice before relying on less effective safeguards such as backup cameras or a spotter.

Discussion point: Are we doing a lot of unnecessary backing during our work tasks?