

WAKE FOREST

DRIVER SAFETY

PARKING AND BACKING BASICS

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. And when you consider the types of places where teens are frequently driving to like school, shopping malls and movie theatres, it stands to reason that they spend a lot of time in parking lots. Safe parking and backing is an important basic for all driver groups to master.

GET THE FACTS

- Every year at least 1,700 people are killed and another 841,000 are injured in non-traffic incidents.¹ ‘Non-traffic’ refers to anything that happens off of public roads or highways, generally in parking lots or drive-ways.
- All vehicles have blind zones—the area behind them 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.
- 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.
- Backup cameras and sensors can be helpful aids for those vehicles with poor visibility.

TIPS FOR SAFE PARKING

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.

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.

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.

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 that 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.

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.