

# AUGUST 2018 TARP BACKING

Backing can be a tricky maneuver when you're driving a big rig with a 53 foot trailer behind it. It takes patience, precision, and a lot of skill. As a professional driver, you will do backing thousands of times in your career. Backing accidents are very common, and even more preventable. With the need to navigate a big rig in and out of various delivery locations, it's no surprise that backing accidents have for years been the highest frequency accidents with the lowest severity in the industry. Let's brush up on some safe backing procedures:

- **Always conduct a thorough pre-trip inspection.** Check the vehicle's brakes, horn, back-up lights, 4-way flashers and back-up alarm for proper working condition.
- **Clean windows and mirrors thoroughly** to provide a clear view. Never back a vehicle when any mirror is covered with dirt, frost, snow or other substances that keep you from visually clearing the path the vehicle will take.
- **Plan ahead.** Do not put yourself into unnecessary backing situations.
- **Get to know the vehicle's blind spots.** Mirrors can never give the whole picture while backing.
- **Adjust mirrors for maximum visibility.** Mirrors are a major key to any backing maneuver. Adjust your mirrors while the tractor and trailer are in a perfectly straight line and you are sitting in the driver's seat in your normal comfortable sitting position. Get help adjusting the right side mirror, if possible.
- **Park defensively.** Carefully survey the parking opportunities when you arrive at the delivery site. If possible, choose an easy-exit parking space that does not crowd neighboring vehicles. Avoid the temptation of pulling into the most convenient location in order to speed up the delivery process. Sometimes, choosing a poor parking space is a matter of necessity - but in many cases, a better defensive position is available if you take the time to look and evaluate.
- **Walk around your vehicle and check and recheck your path of travel.** Before any attempt is made to back, always get out of your cab to look and see what lies between you and your backing destination. Check for workers, pedestrians, soft or muddy areas, potholes, tire hazards and equipment hazards. When backing long distances, it doesn't hurt to stop and recheck your path of travel.
- **Don't forget to look up!** Look for awnings, pipes, framing, fire escapes, wires, etc. that will be in your way. Look up, down, all around and under the truck before backing. The entire path the vehicle will take must be clear of obstacles.
- **Determine space limitations.** Is the space wide enough? Is the loading dock platform high enough or low enough? Be aware that the path may slope up or down, making it difficult to judge vehicle clearance at your destination point. Measure and determine proper distances vertically and horizontally to safely park or unload your freight.
- Once you are behind the wheel, with the engine running and the vehicle in reverse, **check the area again by turning and visually clearing the path that the vehicle will take.** Use all side mirrors to constantly check and visually clear your path.
- **Back slowly and cautiously.** Have complete control of your vehicle. Use the lowest possible gear or idle speed and do not accelerate.

Remember that every backing situation is new and different. Even if you visit the same location several times a day or each week, be watchful each visit.

## G. O. A. L. *“Get Out and Look”*

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email to: tarps@schusterco.com

