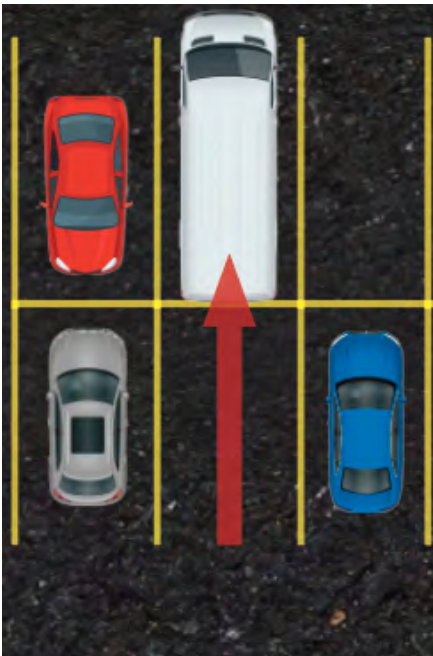


# Implementing procedures to prevent large van backing accidents



Drivers should be trained to position their vehicle for front pull-aways. Designating safe loading/parking areas is also a best practice.

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), one out of four vehicle collisions can be traced to poor backing techniques. These backing collisions result in more than 210 deaths and 15,000 injuries per year<sup>1</sup>. Backing a large vehicle, such as a 12- or 15-passenger van is particularly difficult due to enlarged blind spots.

Organizations should implement protocols to eliminate backing accidents including: eliminating the need to back, purchasing vehicles with the latest backing safety features, hiring qualified large van drivers, providing backing specific driver training, and assessing driver performance.

## Eliminate the need for backing

- For regularly scheduled routes or frequent destinations, establish priority safe loading/parking areas that allow for front pull-away. If front-pull-away areas are not available identify spots which allow for safer backing.
- In some situations it may be safer to back into a spot when arriving than backing out when leaving. If so, instruct drivers as such.
- Identify locations with particularly challenging backing situations and consider requesting the client provide a spotter if available.
- Document these safe loading/parking areas and ensure all drivers are made aware of them. Best practice for regular routes is to develop a route specific loading/parking guide. Route specific guides are helpful during driver orientation and for temporary route drivers.

## Purchase vehicles with advanced backing safety features

- Rear-vision cameras are valuable in minimizing blind spots.
- Rear automatic emergency braking systems are shown to be extremely effective.
- Educate drivers to not be over-reliant on cameras and automatic systems. Use in combination with mirrors and other best practices.

## Qualified drivers

- Restrict operation of large passenger vans to “approved” drivers.
- Hire drivers with experience driving large passenger vans or other larger vehicles.
- Road test every applicant to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary. Set up multiple backing situations during the road test to assess backing skills.
- Establish an orientation program that all new drivers must go through covering safe backing techniques and backing policies.
- Provide refresher training at least annually.

*Continued >>*

### Key Safe Backing Training Concepts

- Unique characteristics of large vans
- Stop/park to allow front pull-away
- Backing from driver's side
- Use of horn and flashers
- Not over-relying on technology
- Proper mirror adjustment/blind spots
- Vehicle walk around
- Eliminating distractions
- Get Out and Look (GOAL)
- More caution near elderly and/or children
- Using a spotter: when needed and safety precautions

### Additional Administrative Activities

- Minimize use of large passenger vans by assigning smaller vehicles to routes where possible.
- Conduct ride-alongs with drivers new to a route.
- Perform periodic ride-alongs or road observations to ensure drivers are following safe backing procedures and loading/parking in designated areas.
- Maintain adequate staff to client ratios to help reduce driver distractions.
- Investigate all backing incidents to determine causal factors and implement corrective measures, such as driver retraining, if needed. Share accident assessments with all drivers as a learning tool to prevent a reoccurrence.

### Additional Resources

Log into [MyLossControlServices.com](https://www.nationwide.com/loss-control-services) for additional resources on large passenger vans including driver resources.

[NHTSA 15-Passenger Van Safety](#)

Evaluate transportation needs to choose the safest vehicle for the task. Typically, minivans have shorter length and lower profiles compared to 12- and 15-passenger vans. This results in smaller blind spots and improved maneuverability.

Providing solutions to help our members manage risk.®

For your risk management and safety needs, contact Nationwide Loss Control Services: 1-866-808-2101 or [LCS@nationwide.com](mailto:LCS@nationwide.com).

<sup>1</sup>National Highway Transportation Administration, Fatalities and Injuries in Motor Vehicle Crashes, DOT HS 811 144, November 2008

<sup>2</sup>Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute, 501(c)(3); Real World Benefits of Crash Avoidance Technologies (June 2019)