This Safety Bulletin is intended to prevent vehicle and equipment backing accidents. It makes a distinction among automobiles, trucks and equipment, and places a higher level of responsibility on operators as vehicle size increases and visibility to the rear of the vehicle decreases. However, there are general backing rules which apply to all vehicles/equipment and shall be followed.

**GENERAL RULES FOR ALL VEHICLES**

Avoid backing whenever possible.

When in doubt, do not back up. Seek assistance from reasonably available co-workers.

Use all rear-view mirrors before and during backing. Use the rear window if unobstructed.

Back slowly and cautiously, keeping the vehicle in complete control.

If a backing maneuver is too tight, do not back-up. Find another means to accomplish the task. Park in another location or remove the obstacle.

If backing is unavoidable, back only as far as necessary to accomplish the intended maneuver.

Backing into traffic requires additional precautions - a flagger or spotter may be needed and, in some cases, additional traffic control may be required.

When parking in a parking lot, back into the space, and leave driving forward.

When parallel parking, try to maintain enough room in front of the vehicle to avoid backing when leaving.
When parking a vehicle that later must be backed, the operator may place a cone behind the vehicle to maintain clearance and serve as a reminder to check behind the vehicle before backing.

**TRUCKS** (including pick-ups, vans, tower and utility trucks, dump trucks, and other vehicles with limited or obstructed visibility to the rear).

Sound the horn before backing. If the vehicle’s horn is not operating, it shall be reported to a supervisor and a Vehicle Trouble Report (EM-3) completed.

Any available employee shall direct (spot for) the driver of a backing vehicle, whether or not he or she is a passenger. When using another employee as a spotter, the driver shall establish eye contact and a clear understanding through verbal communication with the spotter to confirm the spotter’s intention to assist before proceeding. The driver shall keep the spotter in sight at all times while backing. If the driver loses sight of the spotter, he or she shall stop immediately, and exit the vehicle to establish the spotter’s location.

If another employee is not available, the driver shall exit the vehicle before backing to check for clearance, perhaps more than once; and may have to walk completely around the vehicle to do so.

Be alert for overhead lines, guy wires, or any other overhead obstructions.

**EQUIPMENT**

Certain equipment operations are not conducive to all backing rules. For example, it is impractical and possibly dangerous to use a spotter for a loader filling trucks during snow and ice work. Another example is a grader operation where back and forth movement is constant. In such cases, operators shall use extreme care and good judgment and observe all applicable backing precautions.

Operators shall always remain aware of the presence of any pedestrian worker(s) and/or other vehicles/equipment in close proximity. In all situations requiring backing the tasks shall be evaluated as to whether a spotter is warranted, to insure the safety of the operator and any employee(s) in the vicinity. At all times, while backing any vehicle or piece of equipment out of the garage or residency, any available employee shall assist.
**Back-up Alarms**

Various pieces of equipment utilized by the Department may have a back-up alarm or rear video camera system. This may include a rear mounted camera or radar system that activates an alarm when an object is within the area scanned by the radar. When any piece of equipment or vehicle, whether purchased, leased, or obtained through a shared service agreement is used, Department Policy shall be that the rules governing the use of a spotter outlined in the Section under **TRUCKS** shall apply.

Equipment back-up devices which are not functioning shall be reported to a supervisor and a Vehicle Trouble Report (EM-3) completed.

**SNOW & ICE OPERATIONS**

Careful planning can minimize the need for backing during snow and ice work. Managers shall review their snow and ice operations annually to ensure that all options have been explored to minimize or eliminate backing, and identify those situations and/or locations where backing is unavoidable. When backing is unavoidable and visibility is poor during **actual** snow and ice operations, the wing person is not required to exit the truck to direct the backing maneuver; nor is the operator, if alone, required to exit the truck before backing. In such cases, the operator shall use extreme caution, and back slowly and deliberately. Backing in/out of a garage, salt barn, hopper hanger, etc or during any other **non**-snow and ice activity requires use of an available spotter any time of the year.

Any employee who violates the backing policy will be subject to counseling or progressive discipline.

Operators shall make every reasonable effort to avoid backing, and are always fully responsible for the vehicle’s safe operation.