# City of Crystal Lake
# Department of Public Works
# Vehicle & Trailer Backing Policy

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| **Original Date:** | **08-19-2004** |
| **Revised Date:** | **09-04-2018** |
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| **Approved Date:** | **09-04-2025** |
| **Approved By:** | **M. Magnuson** |

**Next Required Review Date: 09-04-2027**

## PURPOSE

The City of Crystal Lake Public Works Department has developed this policy to establish safe work practices for employee's backing a City vehicle and/or trailer. This includes both CDL and non-CDL required vehicles.

## SCOPE

The purpose of backing a vehicle is to maneuver in reverse, typically for parking, exiting a space, or navigating tight areas where forward movement is not possible or practical. Backing a vehicle and or trailer can be hazardous due to limited visibility and the potential for blind spots. Additionally, utilizing safe vehicle backing procedures and a spotter is important to ensure vehicle and trailer backing is conducted safely. The City of Crystal Lakes Public Works Department has established this policy to provide guidelines for the safe backing of vehicles and trailers.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**Management:**

- Management shall implement all sections of this policy.
- Management will train employees on how to safely back a vehicle and trailer in accordance with this policy.
- Management will implement administrative controls to minimize vehicle backing operations.
- Management will implement engineering controls to minimize the associated risks of backing operations.

**Employees:**

- Employees shall follow all applicable portions of this policy while performing work duties.
- Employees shall immediately report near misses related to vehicle backing to their Supervisor.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

City of Crystal Lake Public Works Department employees shall only resort to backing a vehicle or trailer if it is not possible or practical to maneuver forward. Backing can often be avoided by planning routes in advance, parking farther from the destination to allow for pull-through access, or parking alongside a curb in an area clear for forward movement.

When vehicle backing is unavoidable and a second employee is available, a spotter should be utilized. A spotter should be used under the following conditions when available: when backing CDL vehicles, when visibility is obstructed, in areas with limited horizontal or vertical clearances, and when operating vehicles with trailers or other towed attachments.

## ENGINEERING CONTROLS

Engineering controls for vehicle backing aim to minimize associated risks by incorporating safety technologies into the vehicle. Vehicle mounted cameras, proximity sensors, or similar devices are not a substitute for a spotter. They shall be considered driver aids for accident avoidance.

## BACKING PROCEDURES

### Spotters

Employees face increased risk when working around moving vehicles, including spotters assisting with vehicle backing. Spotters are responsible for following proper vehicle backing procedures to ensure their own safety.

Spotters shall:

- Ensure that both the spotter and driver agree on hand signals prior to backing the vehicle.
- Conduct a full walk-around of the vehicle and trailer to assess the surrounding area for potential hazards or obstructions.
- Inspect the area for vertical and horizontal clearance constraints, and monitoring these constraints throughout the backing process.
- Never stand in the path of a backing vehicle.
- Maintain consistent visual contact with the driver while the vehicle is backing.
- Instruct the driver to stop backing immediately if visual contact with the spotter is lost.
- Signal the driver to stop immediately if an object or person enters the path of the backing vehicle.

### Drivers

The driver is responsible for backing and maneuvering the vehicle, even when a spotter is present. Drivers must follow proper vehicle backing procedures to ensure the safety of spotters and other pedestrians.

Drivers shall:

- Avoid backing whenever practical.
- Conduct a full walk-around of the vehicle and trailer to assess the surrounding area for potential hazards or obstructions.
- Inspect the area for vertical and horizontal clearance constraints, and monitoring these constraints throughout the backing process.
- Utilize a spotter when practical or when required under this policy.
- Establish hand signals and a method of communication with the spotter before backing.
- Stop immediately if visual contact with the spotter is lost.
- Do not back a vehicle when unsure of the surrounding area.
- Ensure mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Perform backing maneuver very slowly.

### Backing Alone

If a driver is alone and backing a vehicle is unavoidable, or an employee is driving a non-CDL vehicle where visibility is limited:

- The driver is responsible for backing and maneuvering the vehicle.
- Avoid backing whenever practical.

- Conduct a full walk-around of the vehicle and trailer to assess the surrounding area for potential hazards or obstructions.
- Inspect the area for vertical and horizontal clearance constraints, and monitoring these constraints throughout the backing process.
- Do not back a vehicle when unsure of the surrounding area.
- Ensure mirrors are properly adjusted.
- Perform backing maneuver very slowly.

## TRAINING

Training on vehicle and trailer backing shall be conducted upon initial hire and as necessary thereafter.

Training will include:

- When backing a vehicle is required
- Techniques to avoid backing
- Safe and effective operation of equipment
- Proper backing procedures
- The role of a spotter during backing
- Recognition of hazards and clearance limitations
- Using engineering controls (vehicle mounted cameras, proximity sensors, etc.) as an aid for accident avoidance

## POLICY REVIEW

The Public Works Department will review the Vehicle & Trailer Backing Policy on a 2-year cycle and update the policy as needed.