



A backover incident happens when a worker is struck by a backing vehicle. Backovers can be caused by a variety of factors, including employees who are distracted or working in the vehicle's blind spot, drivers who assume the path is clear, and faulty or inaudible backup alarms. Workers may also fall from a vehicle which then backs over them as it continues to move. Despite the wide range of causes, backovers are preventable with adequate planning, communication and technology.

How Do Backover Incidents Occur?

The reality is that backover accidents can happen for a variety of reasons. Often drivers may not be able to see a worker in their blind spot. Workers may not hear backup alarms because of other worksite noises or because the alarms are not functioning. A spotter assisting one truck may not see another truck behind him. Workers riding on vehicles may fall off and get backed over. Drivers may assume that the area is clear and not look in the direction of travel. Sometimes, it is simply unclear why a worker was in the path of a backing vehicle.

What Can Be Done?

Many solutions exist to prevent backover incidents. Drivers can use a spotter to help them back up their vehicles.

Video cameras with in-vehicle display monitors can give drivers a view of what is behind them.

Proximity detection devices, such as radar and sonar, can alert drivers to objects that are behind them.

Tag-based systems can inform a driver when other employees are behind the vehicle and can alert employees when they walk near a vehicle equipped to communicate with the tag worn by the employee.

On some work sites, employers can create internal traffic control plans, which tell the drivers where to drive and reduce the need to back up.

In some cases, internal traffic control plans can also be used to separate employees on foot from operating equipment.

At minimum, workers in the traffic area need to be wearing some high-visibility clothing.

Training Workers

Training is another tool; you must train workers on the prevention of backover incidents. Blind spots are located behind and around vehicles and are dangerous to employees on foot. Training employees on where those blind spots are will help them to avoid being in those areas. They will be more aware of dangerous areas and blind spots and be more likely to avoid a backover incident.

Another element of this training could include allowing employees who will be working around vehicles to sit in the driver's seat and get a feel for where the vehicles blind spots are and what, exactly, the drivers can see.

For More Information:

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has several blind spot diagrams on <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/highwayworkzones/BAD/imagelookup.html>. These diagrams can help explain what drivers of various large trucks can see.

BACKOVER INCIDENTS DO NOT HAVE TO HAPPEN!

“Preventing Backovers - Overview.” *Occupational Safety and Health Administration*, www.osha.gov/preventing-backovers. Accessed 3 July 2025.

P.O. Box 167 • Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
3001 Monroe Hwy., Bldg. 700A • Bogart, Georgia 30622
855/753-0016 • 678/753-0016 • Fax 678/753-0056
www.agritrust.biz