



# SAFE PARKING FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS



**Protective**  
Insurance Company

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## Avoiding collisions while parking and moving from a parked position

**D**rivers experience congested roadways, massive highways and adverse driving conditions regularly, but most collisions do not occur under these conditions. Most collisions occur in an uncontrolled and potentially chaotic area: Parking lots. Collisions in parking lots are usually minor and property damage is the most likely result. However, these minor collisions can add up to large costs because they can be more frequent, are often below insurance deductibles and can hurt relations with customers. Informing your drivers of the following procedures can help reduce parking-related collisions.

When parking on residential streets, do not back or pull into a residential driveway and do not block driveways. You do not know when someone will back out of their garage or attempt to pull into the driveway. Children, pets, bicycles, and basketball hoops are just some of the many hazards you may encounter in a driveway and it is best to avoid them. Look for low clearances with tree branches and wires. Be sure to have a clear path out before you park.

When parking on narrow roadways or streets, pull out of the lane of traffic as far as you can, put on your four-way hazard flashers and fold your traffic-side mirrors in whenever possible to avoid having them struck. Unless you are stopped in a business or residential district during the period when vehicle lighted lamps are not required (see FMCSR Part 392.22), federal regulations state that if the vehicle is stopped for other than normal traffic stops, emergency triangles must be deployed within 10 minutes. It's also a best practice to use four-way hazard flashers from dusk to dawn, particularly in the winter months with reduced sunlight and adverse weather.

When you return to your vehicle, take a moment to look around the vehicle for obstacles and double check your plan for leaving the area. This step is very important in residential areas. Children and pets are common and you may not see a small child or animal with your mirrors. Children may also leave bikes or other objects around your vehicle. Before pulling back into traffic, check to make sure your mirrors are

properly adjusted, put on your turn signal, check your mirrors, look over your shoulder for approaching traffic and carefully enter the lane of travel when clear. Be sure to also check your tail swing on the side of your vehicle closest to the curb by looking in the mirror on that side of the vehicle.

When parking in a lot, scan the area and look for where you are going to park. Note traffic flow and any fixed objects such as mailboxes, trash cans, light poles or signs where you intend to park. These objects may be hard to see with your mirrors and knowing they are there will help you avoid hitting them when you leave. Remember to look up to see low awnings and low hanging signs, which are commonly hit. This is especially important if you are parking along the building.

## Fixed objects such as mailboxes, trash cans, light poles or signs may be hard to see with your mirrors. Note their position to avoid hitting them when you leave.

Backing can be dangerous and you should never back unless you have no other choice. Always park your vehicle so that you can drive forward to leave whenever possible. If you are parking along a building, leave enough space between other vehicles or obstacles to allow you to pull forward. Avoid blocking traffic



when doing this or you could create a dangerous condition by encouraging motorists to quickly drive around your vehicle.

If you are parking in marked spaces, it is best to find two spaces in a line so that you can pull through the first space and into the second. This will allow you to pull forward when you leave without ever having to back. The next best option is to back into a marked space, because the space is a more controlled environment than the aisle and is safer to back into. You should start this process by rolling past the space to observe the area. If the space is clear, quickly honk your horn a few times to alert anyone that may be near the space and slowly back towards the driver's side. Check all of your mirrors and look over your shoulder to ensure that the space remains clear and you are not going to hit anything.

If you are unsure of where your vehicle is going or if the area is clear, always get out and look. If you are delivering to a new customer and you are unsure of where to park, try calling ahead and asking for specific instructions. This can help you avoid searching for parking in crowded lots and can help build good relationships with customers.

When you return to your vehicle, take a moment to look around the vehicle for obstacles and double check your plan for leaving the area. Before pulling back into traffic, check to make sure your mirrors are properly adjusted, put on your turn signal, check your mirrors, look over your shoulder for approaching traffic and carefully enter the lane of travel when clear. Be sure to check the tail swing on the curb side of your vehicle as well. ■

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