

Reducing Vehicle Backing Accidents

One of the most common causes of accidents in Auto Dealerships is due to the backing of vehicles on dealership lots. Most backing accidents involve simple property damage, but the most costly accidents involve backing into bystanders or fellow employees resulting in serious injuries or even death.

The major contributing cause of backing accidents is **lack of visibility**. Factors include:

- Blocked view due to obstructions like signage, poor lighting, or weather.
- Improperly adjusted mirrors.
- Blind spots that cannot be easily corrected with mirrors.
- Hard to see physical barriers behind the vehicle. (posts, cargo, storage pallets, etc)
- Pedestrians unaware of a backing vehicle. (both in parking lots and in service bays)

Customers visiting the dealership can also cause backing accidents that affect employees. Factors include:

- Driver inattention or unfamiliarity with the layout of the dealership lot.
- Distraction of the driver by bystanders, other traffic, displays and sales events.

So what can be done in dealerships to reduce backing accidents: Management should look at vehicle traffic from two angles: 1. Traffic control on the lot - 2. Driver safety and awareness

Traffic Control on the Lot

- Establish designated routes around the lot. Traffic routes will direct vehicles going towards designated directions. Designated pedestrian walkways are also helpful to keep customers and employees away from vehicular traffic zones.
- Enforce speed limits.
- Install mirrors or warning signs at corners of buildings to enhance awareness of oncoming traffic.
- Honk horns before backing from parking spaces or when backing out of service bays. If necessary, use a spotter for high traffic areas or tight spaces.
- Keep shrubbery, trees, trash cans, and other storage away from parking areas.
- Check Motor Vehicle Records annually on employees with driving responsibilities. Consider administering an annual road test to reinforce safe driving expectations.

Driver Safety and Awareness Training

Driver safety is not just a topic for employees who drive, like technicians, salespersons, or part's drivers. Driver safety should be discussed with all employees to enhance employee awareness of vehicle movement on the lots. The following tips should be reviewed with all employees periodically:

- Walk around the vehicle and note all objects or situations that could be hazardous.
- Adjust mirrors before moving the vehicle.
- Be sure radios are turned "off" and lower the window to hear any verbal warnings.
- Look behind you and tap your horn before backing up.
- Back out slowly to allow other vehicles and pedestrians to see you moving.
- Turn your body around when backing to see out of the rear window. Don't just rely on mirrors- they have blind spots.

Backing accidents are preventable with proper management controls and driver attention. Dealerships should be sure to protect employees and customers from vehicle accidents by controlling vehicular traffic and reinforcing safe driving activities. Do your part to protect your dealership from unnecessary losses from vehicle accidents!

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