Topic of the Month…Backing

You may have heard the saying “When backing just use your mirrors, don’t turn your head”. Ah, NO!

When you are driving, we should be checking mirrors, as well as turning our heads and gathering as much information as possible so that our high-risk movement (backing) is as safe as possible. And do not depend solely on the new back-up cameras that are in the new vehicles when backing either. One third of the State of Georgia’s accidents are related to backing.

There are a couple of memory tools to remember when backing. One tool is G. O. A. L. (Get Out And Look!). Before you move your vehicle, get out and walk around the vehicle and check to see where that tree or pole has moved since you parked last.

Another memory tool is P.A.L.S. (Plan, Area, Look, Slow)

- **Plan** – adjust your mirrors properly before moving vehicle for maximum visibility. Learn your vehicle’s blind spots. When parking the vehicle, park to eliminate backing when possible; basically, plan how you are going to leave the space when you park. Avoid picking a space that you cannot get out of easily such as spaces with SUVs or vans on your side where you can’t see when backing. Avoid a parking space where directly across there is a large vehicle that reduces your backing space or your vehicle turning radius when backing out.
- **Check Area** around your vehicle for people walking, other vehicles backing up behind you and any other obstructions. Check carefully for children and pets.
- **Look** out of your back window. If you are backing straight or to the left, place your left hand on the top of the steering wheel, turn your body to the right, and look over your right shoulder out the rear window. If you’re backing to the right, place your right hand on the top of the steering wheel, turn your body to the left, and look over your left shoulder. Do not just depend on your mirrors. Do not depend solely on your rear view camera. Use all of your resources.
- **Back up SLOWLY** and continually check the rear and sides. Spotter: Do you have a passenger? Can they guide you when you are backing? Parking lots can be a particular challenge when backing up. Whenever possible, park away from entrances, exits and other cars.

DOAS-RMS-Loss Control provides a variety of Driver Safety Courses: Basic Defensive Driving, Advanced Defensive Driving, Driver Improvement Course, and Driver Awareness. Driver’s Alert also provides 30 to 40 narrated PowerPoints; and the DOAS website still has a couple of short videos on line. If we can help you with your agency’s driver training, please give us a call.

Thanks for your time. Let’s work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.

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