

TST #202

Blind Spots

A blind spot is an area around a vehicle or piece of construction equipment that is not visible to the driver or operator, either by direct line of sight or indirectly by use of internal and external mirrors. Blind spots make it difficult for drivers and operators to identify potential hazardous situations, so it is important that everyone driving vehicles or operating equipment on jobsites is aware of all blind spots and take action to minimize accidents. All other workers on the jobsite should also be aware of blind spots and avoid placing themselves in dangerous positions around vehicles and equipment.

The information below will help contractors identify potential hazards associated with blind spots and provide guidance on how to reduce the chances of accidents and injuries occurring.

By not identifying and reducing blind spots, a driver or operator may:

- Strike or run over a person
- Run over materials
- Strike other equipment and vehicles
- Roll the vehicle or piece of equipment over
- Damage utility lines

Steps to increase driver/operator visibility and reduce blind spots:

1. Adjust the rear-view mirror to provide a view directly to the rear. Do not tilt the mirror to assist with the view of traffic to either side of the vehicle—side mirrors should be used for this.
2. Lean your head until it almost touches the driver's side window. Then, adjust the left side mirrors so that you can barely see the side of your car, and no more than that.
3. Lean your head to the right towards the middle of the car and adjust the right side mirror so that you can barely see the right side of the vehicle. The sides of the vehicle should not be seen when your head is perfectly upright.
4. While driving along a four-lane road in the right lane, note an overtaking vehicle in the left lane. Without moving your head, glance in the rear-view mirror and follow it as it approaches. Just before the car disappears from view in the rear-view mirror, glance to the left side mirror to continue following it as it passes you. Then, just before it disappears from the side mirror, you should see it with your peripheral vision. Notice that without even turning your head, you never had a blind spot. Repeat these steps in reverse with the right side mirror. Watch as a vehicle travelling in the right lane goes from your peripheral vision to your right side mirror and finally to your rear-view mirror. Again, no blind spot. If there is a blind spot for, even a fraction of a second, your side mirror needs further adjustment.
5. Vehicles with no rear view mirrors shall be equipped with blind spot mirrors, which are smaller mirrors located in side mirrors. They cover the same viewing center as the side mirror but provide a wider coverage, giving a wide-view picture-in-picture; others give a hugely magnified view of your blind spot.

Upon arrival at a jobsite, meet with the customer or general contractor to find out where the work area will be set up. Reverse large vehicles or large pieces of equipment into the work area and assign a “spotter” to help guide the driver and identify hazards. Roll down windows so that the spotter can be heard, and agree on hand signals before moving the vehicle or equipment. Once work is complete and equipment has been loaded, conduct a walk around the vehicle before leaving the work area.

Blind Spots Quiz

The following statements should be answered with "True" or "False." Answers below.

- 1. It is the responsibility of the driver or operator to reduce blind spots.
- 2. Other drivers, or workers on a jobsite, will always be aware of blind spots.
- 3. Adjusting mirrors will increase driver visibility to the rear of a vehicle.
- 4. Blind spot mirrors do not provide any additional coverage than regular side mirrors.
- 5. Using a spotter will reduce the chances of accidents while reversing.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- Answers:
- 1. True
 - 2. False
 - 3. True
 - 4. False
 - 5. True