

Minor dents and dings may not seem scary or stressful in the context of highway collisions and incidents, however car park collisions are among the most frequent incidents experienced by motor vehicle fleets.

These types of incidents are often lower in cost, however due to their high frequency, this can quickly escalate, costing a company more time and money than fleet managers' may realise. Although slow manoeuvring car park incidents are common, they can be easily avoided.¹

Increased prevalence of rear-view cameras in vehicles has made it easier for drivers to safely reverse out of parking spaces, however the rear-view cameras alone are not 100 percent reliable when it comes to avoiding car park collisions.² It is crucial for drivers to be fully aware of their surroundings while driving in and out of car parks due to the quick and unpredictable activity that can occur, such as other reversing vehicles and pedestrians.²

Choose the best parking spot

- ▼ Check for designated parking zones and determine if there are any time limits that may apply to ensure the parking is safe and legal.
- ▼ Avoid parking near a shopping trolley storage area. If parking near a discarded shopping trolley, return it to the trolley storage area to avoid it causing damage by rolling or being pushed.
- ▼ Avoid parking beside a vehicle requiring access to a child seat. Young children returning to a vehicle could open a door quickly and forcibly, causing damage to an adjacent vehicle. Adults may also need to open a door wider in order to place a child in a car seat.
- ▼ Avoid parking beside large vehicles such as a van as this may obstruct vision when trying to leave the car parking space.
- ▼ If parking in the dark or intending to return to the vehicle after dark, park in a well-lit area, for both theft prevention and personal security.

- ▼ A good choice of parking space is where only one vehicle can park adjacent, such as at the end of a row beside a garden bed or kerb.
- ▼ Park in the centre of the marked bay.
- ▼ Never park taking up 2 spaces, someone may try to park in the gap.³

Returning to a parked vehicle

When returning to a parked vehicle, always approach from the passenger side and complete a circle check. Walk around the vehicle, facing oncoming traffic to check for damage, eyeball your tyres and check for obstructions and proximity to hazards - it's best to deal with hazards before engaging in reverse gear. Always check above the vehicle.

This simple procedure of looking for obstacles and hazards before driving off, can eliminate numerous avoidable collisions.³

Reversing

- ▼ Where possible reverse in to a car parking space rather than drive in, therefore avoiding the need to reverse out.
- ▼ Always consider: "is it safe and necessary to reverse?"
- ▼ Avoid reversing over a long distance.
- ▼ When reversing, there is no right of way. If a vehicle approaches from behind give way. Also, do not rely completely on technology. Technology has its limitations, remain vigilant and be totally aware of surroundings.
- ▼ A driver should reverse slowly, turn their head and frequently scan mirrors. Look back and continue to look back whilst moving in reverse.
- ▼ Don't be too shy or proud to ask someone for guidance.³

Key Points

- ▼ Drive patiently and attentively, whether on a highway or in a car park. Always watch for pedestrians.
- ▼ Park strategically.
- ▼ Be aware of surroundings e.g. if it is windy be careful when opening the door.
- ▼ Always check the vehicle upon return.
- ▼ Use all available aids including: mirrors, cameras and reversing sensors.^{3, 4, 5}

References:

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3. Neilson, J. (2014): Chapter 28: PARKING TIPS, viewed 25/08/2017 <<http://www.sdt.com.au/safedrive-directory-PARKINGTIPS.htm>>
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www.vero.com.au/vero/business-insurance/risk-management
Contact us at riskengineering@vero.com.au