

**PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM**

To Reverse or Not to Reverse, for that is the Question?

The Problem:

Does anyone have a policy of only reverse parking and if so what rationale did you use to implement it?

There are a myriad of moments during everyday life when a common behaviour may be performed in one of two ways, cleaving the world into two feuding camps. There are those that insist driving forward into a car park is trading short-term gain for long-term pain while many individuals maintain that going in forward is the natural thing to do. Then there are your sensible fence sitters which maintain that it depends on the circumstance. So all in all, some find it easier pulling in forwards, some find it easier reversing, no biggie...right?

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said: "In general it is preferable to allow the driver a choice, depending on the car park layout or circumstance."



However

The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) said: "reversing into a space meant cars were in a safer position for pulling away."

A few common arguments for and against:

Reverse	Forward
You shouldn't reverse out into a stream of traffic.	You are going forwards into a small space and reversing into a big space
When going in reverse your steering wheels are at the back so you can manoeuvre the car more accurately	If you use your mirrors and look around before reversing out, safety should not be an issue
More visibility of pedestrians and potential obstructions	Reversing into a park means that people exit faster from a parking space and will be less vigilant on their way out
Load the trunk of your car while standing in the way of traffic	loading groceries when one's trunk was nestled up close to another vehicle can be difficult
When people arrive they are mentally fresh and quite aware of their surroundings	Head in parking minimizes the risk of denting an adjacent parked car

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Research:

After a brief search of the literature, there appears to be very little research done in this area. However,

According to research conducted by Nissan:

- Out of 9,177 drivers surveyed across Europe, 33% experienced car damage within the previous five years, of which 16% was incurred whilst parking.
- Reverse parking was responsible for 45% of parking incidents across Europe within the previous five years.

Taken from [Nissan Europe](#)

- In addition for information regarding front to kerb versus rear to kerb angle parking on streets please see the [Austroads Guideline GTEM Part 11 on Parking Management](#) (please note that this is not a free resource).

Industry Perspective:

- Getting drivers to make use of other staff to ensure that a 'guide' prevents them from hitting anything.
- Our car park, is reverse park only, the logic used is that when people arrive they are mentally fresh and quite aware of their surroundings, when people are leaving they are typically tired and potentially distracted.
- A number of our carriers have a policy of reverse parking of light vehicles at their sites (car parks). When reversing out it is more difficult to see pedestrians or other vehicles travelling along the roadway, reversing in

allows the driver to have clearer vision of any traffic/pedestrian movement when exiting the parking space.

- All quarry sites have mandated reverse parking for yellow machines – Front end loaders, graders, scrapers, water carts and dump trucks
- Vehicles are to be parked so that its first movement is in a forward direction (our directives specify mandatory requirements). The rationale is emergency response/evacuation from site and to minimize people/plant/equipment coming into contact with a reversing vehicle (your vision forward facing is less obstructed than when reversing)
- Reverse parking at depots, treatment plants, etc. where dangerous goods are being stored and/or used (e.g.; chlorine). This is based on the sites risk assessment.



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

For those individual interested in implementing mandatory reverse parking on their worksites, below is a sample reverse parking policy from Clear Risk:

Purpose:

To establish policy and procedures for vehicle reversing. This will prevent incidents and accidents caused by failure to:

- Use rear view mirrors,
- Perform circle checks,
- Physically face in the direction of reversing
- Utilize a spotter.

Responsibility:

All employees

Policy:

Drivers must be particularly careful when reversing any vehicle or equipment. If the driver has to reverse, he/she must follow the listed procedures and, whenever possible, use a spotter, guide or other person to assist the driver in reversing. The driver is ultimately responsible for the safe operation of his vehicle.

Purpose:

- Avoid reversing – Whenever possible, position your vehicle so you can drive forward rather than reverse. If a vehicle cannot be positioned so it can drive forward into and out of a parked position, it must be backed in with a spotter so it will not have to back into traffic later.

- Parking – Always attempt to park in a location and in a manner that avoids reversing. If reversing is required it is preferable to reverse into parking spaces to avoid reversing out.
- Walk around vehicle (Circle Check) – Upon approaching a parked vehicle, the driver must “walk around the vehicle” prior to moving the unit to ensure it is free of obstructions or hazards. Please take the time to look around. It will be well worth the effort.
- Check to ensure all reverse lights and audible warnings are functioning properly.
- Use a spotter – It is up to the driver to designate a passenger to be a spotter.
 - The spotter must be in a position where he/she can see the driver’s blind spot
 - The spotter must stay out of the vehicle and direct the driver safely and away from obstacles until the vehicle as finished reversing.
 - The driver must obey the spotter’s directions but use reasonable precaution and his/her own good judgment to prevent incidents/ accidents.
- Other rules for reversing – A driver/operator of a municipal vehicle shall:
 - Back slowly and only when it is safe to do so, not exceeding a speed of 5 km/h.
 - Check both sides as you reverse (use both rear view mirrors and turn your head around)

[Click here](#) to view a sample of a fleet vehicle reversing policy