

Operational Guide

Early Day Tractor and Iron Inc. – EDGETA Branch 242

Operational Guideline Backing and Spotting of Trailer Tractor Loading and Unloading

Statement of Intent

The most common accident while driving any vehicle is while performing backing maneuvers. While these accidents tend to be low speed by their nature they cause significant damage, financial loss, and in the case of tractor unloading specifically, serious injury and death due to tip overs. It is the intent of these guidelines to reduce or eliminate preventable accidents and to clarify the process and responsibilities of the members of Branch 242 while backing trailers and loading and unloading tractors or other wheeled equipment from trailers.

Backing and Spotting

The backing of trailers and wheeled equipment loading and unloading shall not occur without an assigned and agreed upon spotter.

The spotter is responsible for directing the driver to an agreed location safely. The spotter shall be aware of all obstacles to be negotiated by the driver and issue proper direction to the driver to avoid contact with such obstacles. The spotter should be aware of any safety hazard that presents its self during the operation and take appropriate action. If traffic control is required, this task should be assigned to separate individuals during the backing, loading, or unloading operations. If assigned traffic control on a public road or parking area the traffic control officer shall wear an approved safety vest and shall consider the use of flags to assist in warning and directing traffic under his or her direction.

Prior to a backing, loading, or unloading operation, the driver and spotter shall meet and together do a 360 degree walk around observing any hazard that would affect the operation.

The spotter, during backing and unloading operations, shall assume a position of 5 feet to the left of the driver side and approximately 10 feet from the back of the trailer. The spotter shall maintain this separation throughout the operation.

The driver shall not begin the operation until the spotter is visible and the commands of “ready” have been given by both the driver and the spotter. If traffic control is determined to be necessary the driver, the spotter and the traffic control officer must confirm the ready command.

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If the spotter cannot be seen by the driver the driver shall immediately stop the operation.

There shall be only one spotter assigned to the position although any member observing has the duty and the expressed permission to stop the operation if any safety hazard is observed.

Standard hand signals shall be used always in conjunction with verbal commands during trailer backing operations.

Note...Branch 242 has recommended that trailers should be equipped with an automatic back up alarm device and the use of the four way flashers on the tow vehicle be used.

Loading and Unloading Operations

In the case of tractor or wheeled equipment loading and unloading, the main responsibility of the spotter is to identify potential safety problems during the operation.

A walk around should be done by the driver together with the spotter assuring proper ramp placement, trailer stability (including the blocking of the rear of the trailer if necessary to prevent tipping), and assure proper attachment of the trailer to the tow vehicle. Proper operation of the equipment being unloaded should be confirmed and a clear area of operation shall be maintained during the loading or unloading operation. Verbal commands shall be used as visual commands will not be observable by the driver. The spotter shall use the command of “stop” at any time the operation becomes unsafe.

Use of Winches for Loading and Unloading Tractors and Equipment

The use of winches is acceptable to load and unload tractors and equipment. The equipment should be inspected prior to each use to assure proper operation. A spotter shall also be used during a winch operation and all personnel shall remain to the side of the equipment being loaded or unloaded. The verbal command of stop shall be used to stop the operation if an unsafe condition arises. A safety strap of the proper size and strength shall be used to limit the travel of the equipment being loaded or unloaded. The safety strap shall be reset as necessary to limit the travel of the equipment in case of winch failure. Winch operation shall be stopped prior to resetting the safety strap. All personnel shall remain out of the potential direction of the equipment being loaded or unloaded at all times.

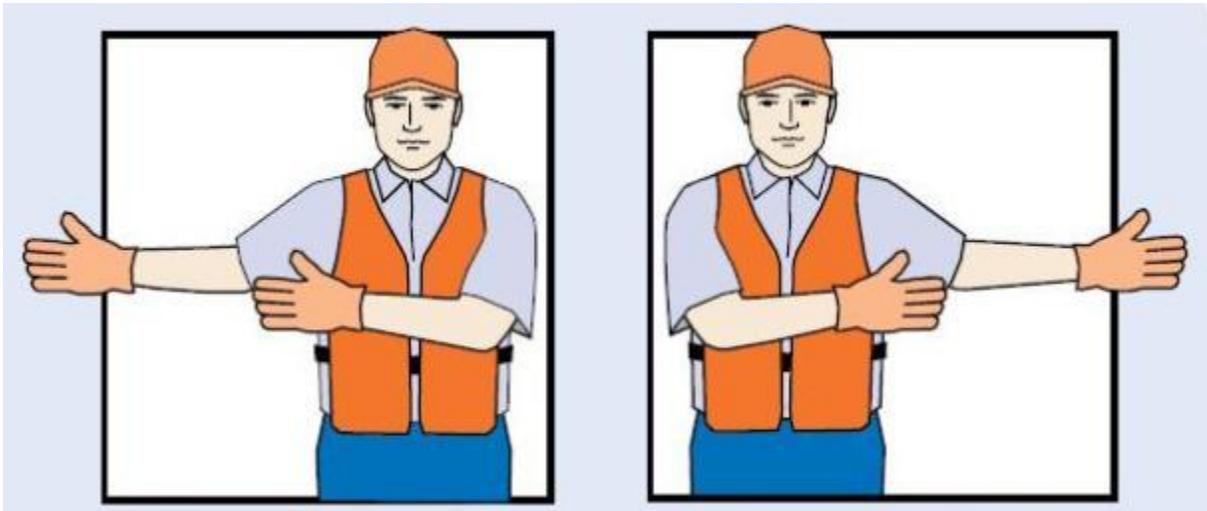
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Standard Spotter Hand Signals when directing a backing operation

Turn the rear of trailer right

Turn the rear of the trailer left



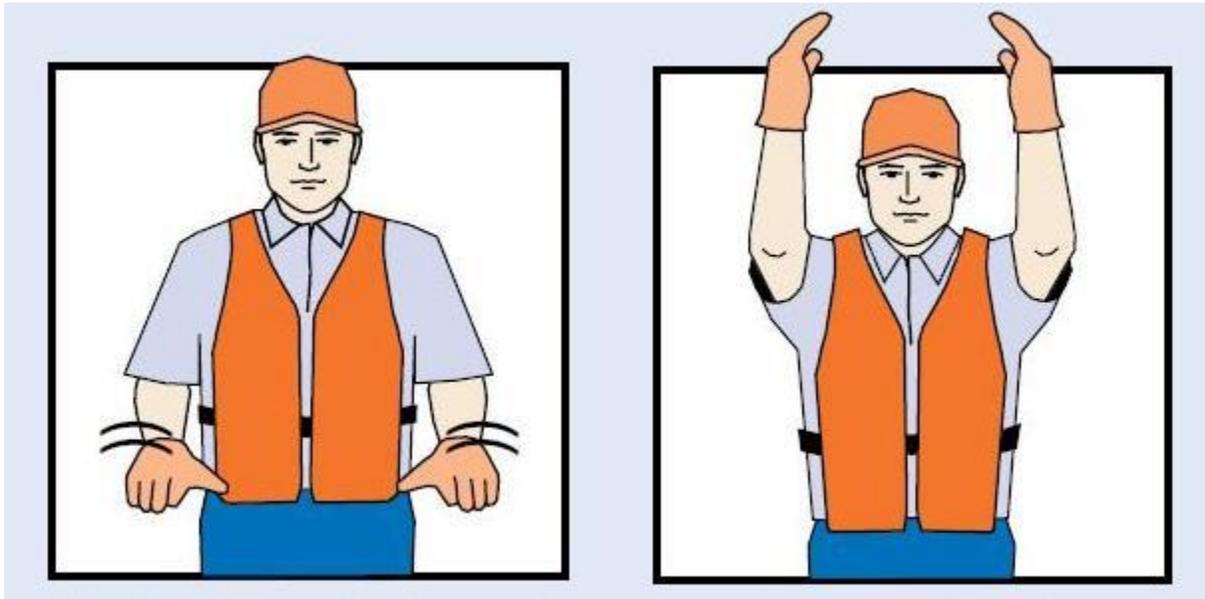
Distance to go (palms apart indicating how far).



Closed forearms indicate STOP.

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Slowly (spotter pumping palms down)

Come straight back