#### Refuse Haulers: Backing Basics

While backing is to be avoided whenever possible, every driver must make some backups on nearly every trip. **The first thing is that all backing must be done slowly**. Skillful drivers can perform the backing maneuver time after time, with the greatest of ease, but you will never see a good driver back at high speed.

When moving in reverse, the driver does not see so well behind. In addition, steering wheels are no longer the lead wheels, and control of direction is awkward. **Concentrate on the fact that in reverse movement controls are reversed, and response to steering is sluggish.** With these facts in mind, the good driver takes an extra step to make sure he can direct his backing vehicle exactly as he wishes.

First, get a clear view of the spot into which you must back. If it is a normal, familiar backing situation with good clearances, back in as long as you can see the backing path clearly in the rearview mirrors. **If the place is strange, or there is any question about clearances, the good driver will climb down from the cab and survey the place into which he must back.** Note any obstructions, low hanging wires or signs, or other overhead objects. Clearances must be wide enough and high enough.

The good driver will drive as close as possible before starting his backup, make his turn on the driver’s side (if possible), so that he can see the back of the vehicle swinging into position. All the time he is watching clearances on both sides through his rearview mirrors**. When within a few feet of his stop, he will lean out and look directly back until the backup is completed.**

Many good drivers make use of a guide to “flag” their backing maneuver. Standing at the rear where the driver can see him either directly or through mirrors, the guide gives positive signals for steering, slowing and stopping.

Good drivers who must go into a dead-end alley or driveway where there are no turnarounds usually will back in from the street, so as to avoid the necessity of backing out in traffic. If necessary to back into the street, they will get someone to flag down traffic or to signal when the way is clear.

Drivers in residential neighborhoods should never start backing out of a parking space without first walking around to make sure there is nothing in the way. There have been too many cases of children stopping to play behind a parked vehicle, only to be crushed when a driver backed up without looking. **Children, their toys or other obstructions, normally cannot be seen with the rearview mirrors.**

Above all, approach every backing maneuver with caution, and a soft touch on the gas pedal. **Good drivers agree that backing is a slow and possibly dangerous operation and they try to avoid it whenever possible.** When backing cannot be avoided, be in control of the vehicle, even in reverse motion always take it slow and easy.