

PARKING, REVERSING AND MANOEUVRING SAFELY



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AVOIDING COSTLY DAMAGE

Even careful and experienced drivers sometimes find manoeuvring and reversing difficult. Most of us don't do much reversing and as result collisions regularly occur when parking. While these usually happen at low speeds, the design of modern vehicles means that even a small error can result in an expensive bill.

So, how can you avoid costly dents, scrapes and prangs to your vehicle while parking? This guide can help you by following a few simple steps, which could make all the difference.

Think



When it comes to avoiding accidents while manoeuvring, **R.E.V.E.R.S.E.** will help you to remember which key points to keep in mind.

- R** **Reversing** into a parking space is generally much safer than reversing out into a potentially busy area, as it gives you the best visibility of oncoming traffic, especially if larger vehicles are beside you.
- E** **Exercise caution** from the start and you immediately reduce the risks associated with parking and reversing. Take your time before you park and pick the best parking space not necessarily the first available space.
- V** **Visualise blind spots**, as all vehicles have blind spots and they differ from one make and model to another. Know where they are and then check them, whenever appropriate, when parking.
- E** **Ensure accessibility** by parking your vehicle in the centre of a parking bay. It then means you can easily access your vehicle and the adjacent cars have plenty of space. This reduces the likelihood of either car getting scratched or scraped.
- R** **Remember: mirror, signal, manoeuvre** – use your mirrors before signalling and finally manoeuvring into a parking space. Watch out for other cars and pedestrians.
- S** **SLOW** – If you take your time while manoeuvring your car into a parking bay it helps you remain in full control.
- E** **Evaluate the situation** – check your vehicle will fit in the parking space, to decide whether reversing is the safest option and that it's safe to manoeuvre your vehicle into place. Also consider the best place to park as there is a greater likelihood your car will be hit on a corner, narrow driveway or section of road, or at the end of a row.

Van driver?

Reversing to the right side allows you to look out of the driver side window in the direction you're heading rather than reversing unsighted to the left.

Mirrors allow you to see areas low down and close to the car that you can't see over your shoulders. Always do a 360-degree observation, supplemented by mirrors rather than using mirrors alone.

How to...

REVERSE INTO A PARKING SPACE

Five steps to perfect reversing



Like most processes, reversing into a parking space becomes much easier if it's broken down into a few, simple steps.

- 1** After identifying the space you intend to reverse into, pull up about one car length past it.
- 2** Make sure that you've thoroughly checked for other vehicles, low obstructions and pedestrians. Then use your indicators to show that you intend to reverse into the bay and put your car into reverse. Allow plenty of room as the front of the car will swing out.
- 3** Look through the rear window and reverse at a slow speed to accurately position your car within the bay. Carry out checks for vehicles and pedestrians whenever appropriate.
- 4** Guide your car into the space and always check in your door mirrors to make sure you are well away from neighbouring vehicles.
- 5** Straighten your steering wheel to position your car centrally within the bay. It's often necessary to manoeuvre your car into place using forward and reverse gears.

PARKING TECHNOLOGY

Tools to help you park

Parking sensors: the most common reversing aid

Sensors are good, but they can't detect obstructions above or below the line of vision. Instead, they alert you to the proximity of other parked cars and any other objects which are out of view, from children to low walls.

Always carry out all the usual checks when reversing and only use parking sensors as additional safety tools.

Parking sensors usually begin working automatically when reverse gear is selected and trigger an alarm if anything is detected. This sound – which can either be a beeping noise or a buzzer – gradually increases in frequency as the object gets nearer.

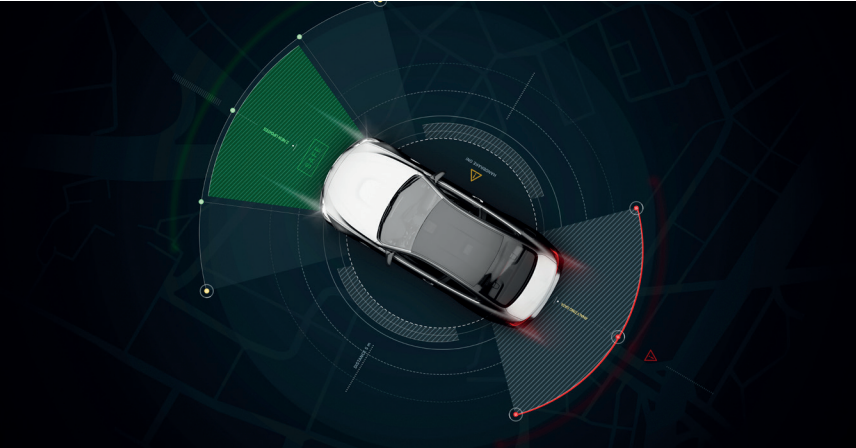
The two main types of parking sensor

Ultrasonic parking sensors tend to be the ones that most car manufacturers fit and work by bouncing sound waves off obstacles.

Main disadvantage: they can't generally be used with a tow bar and have been known to miss small or narrow objects.

Electromagnetic parking sensors work by creating an electromagnetic field around the car's bumper, in which they are located.

Main disadvantage: as a general rule, they only detect objects once the car is moving.



Reversing cameras: see what's behind you

Also known as backup or rear view cameras, reversing cameras aim to aid safety by displaying what's behind your vehicle. They are normally activated when you engage reverse gear. A camera attached to the rear of the car relays an image of the view to your vehicle's navigation screen.

In larger vehicles, which don't always have good rear visibility, reversing cameras can be helpful. However, they don't provide a peripheral view and are not always effective at night when they rely on reversing lights to illuminate what's behind the vehicle.

Also, cameras won't always pick up higher obstructions such as an overhanging fire escape or tree branches. Like parking sensors, cameras help you, not replace you.

Automatic parking systems: the car that parks itself

Self-parking cars take the stress out of the manoeuvre by enabling your vehicle to park itself. Several manufacturers now offer 'automatic parking systems' either as optional extras or as standard. Some automatic parking systems can also assist drivers reversing into car park bays.

The technology, which uses a series of sensors positioned around the car, has been designed to make the process of parallel parking as straightforward as possible. The driver simply locates a space in conjunction with the car's automatic parking system which scans the area to ensure that the space is big enough.

After reverse is selected, the car then steers itself into the space with the driver controlling the accelerator and brake. Some vehicles need the driver to align the parking guides with the chosen space, to ensure the vehicle parks accurately. At any point during this process, the driver can override the system – normally by moving the steering wheel or pressing the brake firmly.



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