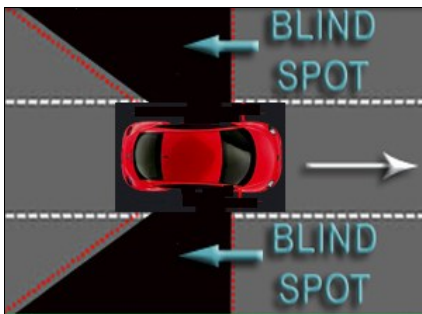




## Tailgate Topics & Tips



### Tailgate Topic #21 - Beware of Blind Spots



A *blind spot* in a vehicle is an area around the vehicle that cannot be directly observed by the driver while at the controls. (Wikipedia)

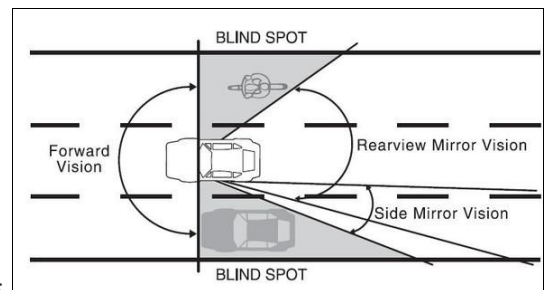
Definition of *Driver Visibility*: is the maximum distance at which the driver of a vehicle can see and identify prominent objects around the vehicle. (Wikipedia)

#### The Questions for this Meeting:

##### Where are blind spots commonly found around vehicles?

Answers:

- Directly in front where you cannot see over the hood. This area is particularly large in vehicles with high and long hoods and is much smaller in vehicles without this design.
- Directly behind the vehicle. Some types of vehicles do not permit a view to the rear. If it does, the mirrors are unable to show the area directly behind and near to the bumper.
- Possibly at the sides and to the rear areas, in a triangle shape, beginning from where the side or "wing" mirror stops providing a view into this area and continuing forward to where a driver's peripheral vision begins.



##### What are the dangers associated with a blind spot?

Answers:

- That there will be a hazard there that you are not aware of when you move your vehicle.
- That you will be in another driver's blind spot when THEY move THEIR vehicle.



##### What are some ways to minimize the blind spots hazards?

Discuss within the group.

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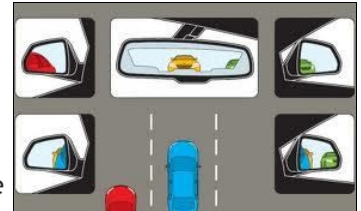
## Tailgate Topics & Tips



### Tailgate Tips:

#### Minimize blind spot danger around your vehicle:

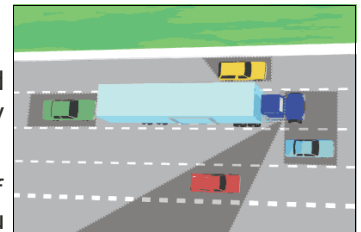
1. Keep your mirrors properly adjusted and clean. You should adjust your outside wing mirrors so that you barely see (or don't see) the side of your vehicle when you turn your head. This positioning reduces the size of the blind spot to your left and right rear sides. If you have an inside rear view mirror, centre it on the rear window.
2. Monitor traffic flow so that if a vehicle moves into the blind spot and you still don't see it, even with properly adjusted mirrors, you know it's there because you saw it move there.
3. Shoulder check before moving your vehicle sideways to lane change or turn to make sure it's clear.
4. Walk around your vehicle and check the area before moving. This is most crucial when backing and if your vehicle has a large front blind spot, important if moving forward from a parked position also.



#### Minimize blind spot dangers around other drivers:

Remember that other drivers may not have the same level of care that you take and could easily think that their blind spot is clear if they don't adjust mirrors correctly or walk around before backing or starting out forward.

1. Avoid driving in another driver's blind spot on multilane roads. Position yourself (if possible) so that if the other driver makes a rapid lane change without looking, you will NOT be in the way. Fall back to get out of the blind spot or pull forward to move INTO this driver's peripheral vision.
2. Watch for back-up lights and remember that many vehicles have huge blind spots to the rear. If you see back-up lights, presume that this driver is backing blindly and does not see you!
3. Many large trucks have stickers that say, "if you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you". Think about this and move your vehicle to keep the truck mirrors in view. Remember that the bigger the box on a truck, the further back you have to be in order for the driver to see you in their mirrors.



### Practical Challenge:

- Take the group out and park a vehicle in the yard or lot, and take turns sitting in the vehicle while other workers stand in different positions to either hide in a blind spot or be seen.
- See how many people can hide around the vehicle where the driver can't see!
- Try it with properly adjusted mirrors (see [Tailgate Topics & Tips #16](#) if you need review) and with poorly adjusted mirrors.
- Take it to the next level by using 2 vehicles and while stationary, simulate blind spots and mirror vision on a laned roadway.

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Spencer McDonald is the president and founder of Thinking Driver, a driver training and development company in Surrey, B.C. Spencer's formal education is in psychology and motivation, and has brought these fields together with road safety and education to develop attitude-based driver safety programs.