

The danger of blind spots

The area behind your vehicle can be a killing zone

Every year, children are injured and killed because drivers (in some cases, parents) don't see them while backing up. According to Kids and Cars (www.kidsandcars.org), a nonprofit group that wants to improve child safety around cars, backover incidents involved 539 children in 2005, with 220 fatalities. Those deaths represented a 23 percent increase from 2004.

A contributing factor is that larger vehicles (SUVs, pickups, and minivans), which have become increasingly popular, have larger blind spots than passenger cars. A blind spot is the area behind a vehicle that a person can't see from the driver's seat.

To help consumers understand how large some blind spots are, *Consumer Reports* has measured the blind spots of a number of popular models. The results for both an average-height driver (5 feet 8 inches) and a shorter driver (5 feet 1 inch) are listed in the accompanying charts.

To measure the blind spots, a 28-inch traffic cone was positioned behind the vehicle at the point where the driver could just see its top. As the illustration shows, longer and taller vehicles tend to have significantly larger blind spots. (The shading shows the length of each blind spot; lighter for an average-height driver, darker for a shorter driver.)

Bottom line: Your best defense against backover accidents is to get out of your vehicle and check behind it just before you back up. If kids are nearby, make sure you can see them while backing up.

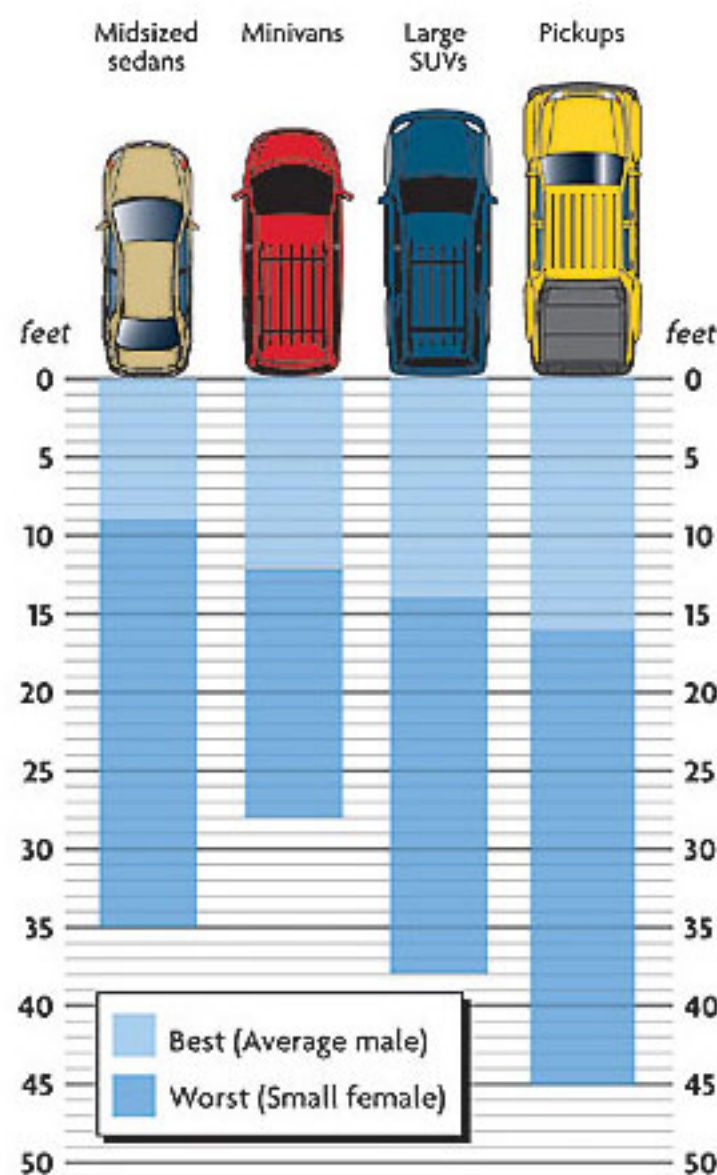


Illustration by Trevor Johnston

Blind-zone measurements

This chart shows the length of the blind spot of each listed vehicle. The distance noted is how far behind the vehicle a 28-inch traffic cone had to be before the person, sitting in the driver's seat, could see its top by looking through the rear window.

Make/Model	Year	Driver 5 feet 8 inches	Driver 5 feet 1 inch
Small Sedans			
Chevrolet Cavalier LS	2003	9	17
Chevrolet Cobalt LS	2005	10	24
Dodge Neon SXT	2003	17	43
Ford Focus ZX4 SES	2005	12	24
Ford Focus ZX4 ST	2005	14	30
Honda Civic EX	2005	8	18
Honda Civic EX	2006	12	20
Honda Civic Hybrid	2006	12	21
Honda Civic Hybrid	2003	12	28
Hyundai Elantra GT	2005	8	19
Kia Spectra EX	2004	13	20
Mazda3i	2004	12	22
Mitsubishi Lancer EVO	2003	14	31
Saturn Ion 3	2005	12	21
Subaru Impreza 2.5 i	2006	6	11
Subaru WRX STi	2004	14	21
Suzuki Aerio GS	2003	23	49
Suzuki Forenza S	2004	13	16
Volkswagen Jetta 2.5	2006	11	22
Volkswagen Jetta TDI	2006	11	22
Midsized Sedans			
Acura RL	2005	10	23
Acura TL	2004	16	22
Acura TSX	2004	14	12
Audi A4 1.8T	2004	11	19
Audi A4 2.0T	2006	11	21
Audi A6 3.2 Quattro AT	2005	10	19
BMW 325i	2006	12	24
BMW 530i	2004	15	21

Buick LaCrosse CXL	2005	15	21
Cadillac CTS	2003	11	25
Cadillac CTS 2.8	2006	11	25
Cadillac STS	2005	21	27
Chevrolet Impala 3LT	2006	12	28
Chevrolet Impala LS	2004	14	26
Chevrolet Malibu Base (4 cyl.)	2004	12	17
Chevrolet Malibu LS (V-6)	2004	12	17
Dodge Stratus SXT	2004	18	22
Ford Fusion SEL	2006	15	26
Ford Taurus SES	2004	21	23
Honda Accord EX (4 cyl.)	2003	13	17
Honda Accord EX (V-6)	2006	11	19
Honda Accord EX (V-6)	2003	13	23
Honda Accord Hybrid	2005	14	21
Hyundai Sonata GLS (V-6)	2006	9	22
Infiniti G35	2003	11	20
Infiniti M35 X AWD	2006	0 with camera	0 with camera
Jaguar S-Type	2004	10	21
Kia Optima EX	2004	9	13
Lexus ES330	2004	12	19
Lexus GS300	2006	0 with camera	0 with camera
Lexus IS250	2006	13	21
Lincoln LS Premium	2003	15	26
Lincoln Zephyr	2006	18	33
Mazda6 i (4 cyl.)	2003	12	22
Mazda6 s (V-6)	2003	12	19
Mercedes-Benz C230	2006	10	15
Mercedes-Benz E320	2004	12	18
Mercury Milan	2006	17	35
Mitsubishi Galant ES	2004	19	25
Mitsubishi Galant GTS	2005	21	29
Nissan Altima 2.5S	2005	11	21
Nissan Maxima 3.5 SE	2004	12	27
Pontiac G6	2005	18	27
Pontiac Grand Prix GT2	2004	13	20
Saab 9-3 2.0T	2006	12	22
Saab 9-3 Aero	2003	16	29
Saab 9-5 Arc	2004	13	19
Saturn L300	2003	13	27

Subaru Legacy 2.5 GT Limited	2005	11	18
Subaru Legacy L	2003	13	25
Suzuki Verona LX	2004	15	22
Toyota Camry	2005	13	24
Volkswagen Passat 2.0T	2006	13	22
Volkswagen Passat 3.6L	2006	12	22
Volkswagen Passat GLS TDI	2004	10	15
Volkswagen Passat GLX	2003	9	23
Volvo S40	2004	11	18
Volvo S60 2.5T	2004	13	19
Volvo S80 T6	2004	15	19

Large Sedans

Audi A8 L	2004	20	27
BMW 745Li	2003	14	25
Buick Lucerne	2006	16	24
Buick Park Avenue Ultra	2003	9	20
Cadillac DTS	2006	12	30
Chrysler 300 Touring	2005	16	23
Chrysler 300C	2005	16	23
Dodge Charger SXT (6 cyl)	2006	11	22
Ford Five Hundred SEL AWD	2005	10	16
Ford Five Hundred SEL FWD	2005	10	16
Hyundai Azera Limited	2006	11	21
Hyundai XG350 L	2003	9	24
Jaguar XJ8 Vanden Plas	2004	11	19
Kia Amanti	2004	10	21
Lexus LS430	2003	9	16
Lincoln Town Car (standard wheel base)	2003	12	21
Mercedes-Benz S430	2003	11	22
Mercury Grand Marquis LSE	2003	11	23
Toyota Avalon XLS	2005	15	25

Wagons & Hatchbacks

Chevrolet Aveo LS	2004	5	10
Chevrolet HHR LT	2006	14	20
Chevrolet Malibu LS Maxx	2005	17	23
Chrysler PT Cruiser Limited	2006	8	14
Dodge Magnum SXT	2005	13	22
Mazda6 wagon	2004	16	19
Pontiac Vibe	2006	11	21
Scion xA	2004	7	11
Scion xB	2004	8	11
Subaru Outback 2.5i	2005	13	18

Toyota Prius	2004	7	14
Volkswagen GTI	2006	8	18
Volvo V50 T5	2005	8	13

Small SUV - Two Door

Jeep Wrangler Sport Unlimited	2005	5	11
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Small SUVs - Four Door

Chevrolet Equinox LT	2004	18	28
Ford Escape XLT	2004	13	16
Honda CR-V EX	2005	14	20
Honda Element EX	2003	18	35
Hyundai Tucson 4WD GLS	2005	13	27
Jeep Liberty Limited diesel	2005	12	18
Kia Sorento EX	2003	14	26
Nissan Xterra S	2005	10	18
Pontiac Aztek	2003	9	14
Saturn Vue V6	2004	16	22
Subaru Forester 2.5 X	2003	7	12
Subaru Forester 2.5 X	2006	9	12
Toyota FJ Cruiser	2007	14	27
Toyota RAV4	2004	12	22
Toyota RAV4 Base (4 cyl.)	2006	18	25
Toyota RAV4 Limited (V-6)	2006	16	21

Midsized SUVs

Acura MDX Touring	2003	0 with camera	0 with camera
BMW X3	2004	15	24
BMW X5 3.0i	2005	17	28
Cadillac SRX V8	2004	19	27
Chevrolet TrailBlazer EXT LT	2003	19	35
Chrysler Pacifica	2004	21	39
Ford Explorer XLT	2006	18	26
Ford Freestyle SEL AWD	2005	19	28
Honda Pilot EX-L	2005	0 with camera	0 with camera
Hummer H3	2006	31	45
Infiniti FX35	2003	15	22
Jeep Commander Limited	2006	44	69
Land Rover LR3 V8 SE	2005	26	39
Lexus GX470	2004	15	24
Lexus RX400h	2006	0 with camera	0 with camera
Mercedes-Benz ML350	2006	16	24
Mercury Mountaineer Luxury AWD	2005	14	18

Mitsubishi Endeavor XLS	2004	18	30
Mitsubishi Montero Limited	2003	11	23
Mitsubishi Outlander XLS	2003	15	26
Nissan Murano SL	2005	14	22
Nissan Pathfinder LE	2005	14	18
Subaru B9 Tribeca	2006	19	29
Toyota 4Runner SR5	2003	13	22
Toyota Highlander Hybrid	2006	17	20
Volkswagen Touareg	2004	11	22
Volvo XC90 T6	2003	14	25

Large SUVs

Chevrolet Suburban 1500	2005	18	25
Chevrolet Tahoe LT	2007	16	38
Dodge Durango Limited	2004	19	24
Nissan Pathfinder Armada LE	2004	17	24
Toyota Sequoia Limited	2002	14	25

Minivans

Dodge Grand Caravan SXT	2005	12	20
Ford Freestar SEL	2004	13	16
Honda Odyssey EX-L RES	2005	16	27
Kia Sedona EX	2003	18	35
Mazda MPV ES	2003	12	24
Nissan Quest 3.5 SL	2004	17	28
Saturn Relay FWD 3	2005	19	26
Toyota Sienna XLE FWD	2005	13	28

Pickups

Chevrolet Avalanche 1500	2002	29	51
Chevrolet Avalanche LT	2007	31 (no camera), 0 with camera	50 (no camera), 0 with camera
Chevrolet Colorado Crew Cab LS	2005	18	25
Chevrolet Silverado 1500	2004	23	37
Dodge Dakota SLT	2005	17	24
Dodge Ram 1500 SLT	2004	26	35
Ford F150 XLT	2004	34	45
Honda Ridgeline RTS	2006	18	28
Nissan Frontier LE	2005	16	25
Nissan Titan SE	2004	25	42
Toyota Tacoma	2005	17	24
Toyota Tundra SR5	2004	29	44

Coupes

Chevrolet Cobalt SS Coupe	2005	23	32
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Chevrolet Monte Carlo SS	2006	17	24
Chrysler Crossfire	2004	18	22
Honda Civic Si	2006	15	19
Hyundai Tiburon GT	2003	10	23
Mazda RX-8	2003	14	19
Mitsubishi Eclipse GS	2006	14	23
Nissan 350Z Touring	2003	12	20

Convertibles and Roadsters

Chrysler PT Cruiser Convertible	2005	13 top up / 20 top down	20 top up / 29 top down
Chrysler Sebring Limited	2005	10 top up / 9 top down	18 top up / 19 top down
Ford Mustang Convertible	2005	10 top up / 10 top down	21 top up / 21 top down
Mazda MX-5 Miata	2006	3 top up / 2 top down	6 top up / 6 top down
MINI Cooper S Convertible	2005	6 top up / 14 top down	13 top up / 29 top down
Pontiac Solstice	2006	4 top up / 3 top down	18 top up / 10 top down
Porsche Boxster 2.7	2002	2 top up	20 top up
Toyota Camry Solara SLE	2005	16 top up / 17 top down	23 top up / 21 top down
Volkswagen Beetle GLS	2005	6 top up / 19 top down	16 top up / 52 top down