

SPOTTING 101: GOOD SPOTTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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A friend sent me a quick note asking if there are universal hand signals for the spotters. Every spotter may have a slight variation, but below is a sample of the most commonly used signals.

I personally prefer to use a thumb or finger to point right and left, this avoids possible confusion when the entire hand is waving right and left. I also prefer only one signal at a time, and not "Continue straight, slowly." I guess I am not good at multi-tasking.

Editor's Note: The most critical (and perhaps the most difficult) rule to follow is only having one spotter. And remember that some of us can't see over the hood when it's up in the air, so verbal cues are good too.



ONE SPOTTER ONLY **223**

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LEFT AND RIGHT

I've seen some arm-waving, body-twisting, facial-contorting, noisy guidance attempts that would have puzzled Freud. My recommendation is kinda like learning to rub your stomach and pat your head at the same time. It's a coordination challenge, but once mastered, you've got all bases covered.



First, be acutely aware you and the spotter are facing different directions. This can lead to left-right confusion. This also means backing needs left-right clarification, too.

I use the same left-right meaning for reverse and forward. If I point left, that means turn the wheel left, regardless of the direction of 4X travel.

ONE SPOTTER ONLY

Also, let there be only one spotter. There is nothing more complicated for the driver than multiple spotters. This only leads to more confusion. The spotter should definitely listen to others, and maybe ask for blind-spot assistance, but the driver should only follow one guide.



As the driver, discard all but the most panic-ridden verbal commands from others. Try to zero in on visual guidance cues. Direct others to help the spotter, not the driver. I've seen panic beset the most experienced driver when confronted with too many traffic cops, verbal or visual.

HAND SIGNALS

I recommend you use one hand for movement and the other for direction. I think it best to use your better-coordinated writing hand for movement and the other for direction information.

Face your flat palm or opposite side (that's the knuckle-side) at the driver for movement information. You motion *continued* movement with a *knuckle-side* wave. Use the *non-thumb* edge of the other hand to indicate *direction*. These are two distinctly different shapes and easy to distinguish in times of stress. The exception is when you want an *immediately stop*, then you get both *palms or fists* in the face. When I want you to *slow down*, it's like starting *tar-tar*ches with both palms flat to the ground. I push down toward my knees.

The figures show all the hieroglyphics and what they mean. I learned the *mibbler* while on a Ford assignment at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. Tanks and amphibious assault vehicle controllers use hand signals. Unofficially, they use the *rubbler*, which means *ultra slow* and very controlled movement. I like it. It represents a third distinct hand shape that easily tells others, "Just a little bit!"



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