

7004.01

Fire Department Vehicle Backing Standard Operating Procedure



This procedure is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. The procedure should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this procedure, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.

Related Policies: 213.02, 213.03, NFPA 1002

Applicable HI Statutes:

I. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of all personnel, and the public by utilizing proper backing procedures. Secondary to life safety, prevention of backing incidents decreases potential for property damage, and subsequent replacement or repair costs.

II. APPLICABILITY

All members. Company officers and supervisory personnel shall ensure compliance

III. PROCEDURES

1. Backing of Fire Department Vehicles (FDVs)
 - a. Backing of fire apparatus and ambulances shall not be done without the aid of a guide.
 - b. Refer to section III, D where no spotter is available.
2. Drivers Shall:
 - a. Avoid backing where possible.
 - b. Understand and operate in compliance with all approved hand signals performed by the spotter.
 - c. Reverse at no more than 5 miles per hour.
 - d. Roll both front windows down completely as needed.
 - e. Confirm who your spotter is and confirm any hazards observed.
 - f. Utilize additional spotters as needed.
 - g. Be clear with the spotter on the backing plan.
 - h. Maintain visual contact between the driver and all personnel working close to the vehicle when backing.
 - i. Stop immediately when visual contact with the spotter is lost.
 - j. Understand and comply with all approved hand signals.
 - k. Give a three-blast warning on the horn just prior to backing.
 - l. Check both side mirrors repeatedly when backing.
 - m. Utilize a spotter at all times, and consider additional spotters as needed.
3. Spotters backing fire department vehicles shall:
 - a. Conduct a "six sided size-up" by surveying the backing area and all other sides of the vehicle, checking for hazards. Be sure to assess overhead and ground clearance.
 - b. Clear the backing area of all personnel, first responders, and citizens. Have vehicles that can be moved cleared from the backing area.
 - c. Be clear with the driver on the backing plan.
 - d. Relay any observed hazards to the driver before backing.



- e. Have a personal exit route planned out of the vehicle path based upon hazards.
 - f. Utilize additional spotters as needed.
 - g. Obtain visual or verbal acknowledgement with the driver that you are the spotter. Inform the driver of any additional spotters being utilized and their positions.
 - h. Position at a safe distance at the rear of the unit in view of the driver's mirror.
 - i. Establish visual contact with the driver and maintain continuous eye contact in the mirror.
 - j. Be mindful of hazards that come into play during backing.
 - k. Utilize approved hand signals at all times.
 - l. Stop the driver if any hazards are observed or if you are uncertain of the direction in which the driver is maneuvering.
4. If no spotter is available, driver shall:
- a. Safely exit the vehicle and perform a walk-around inspection.
 - b. Complete a "six sided size-up" and survey the backing area.
 - c. Repeat as many times as necessary.
 - d. Give a warning of three horn blasts just prior to backing.
5. Approved Hand Signals:
- a. Straight Back: The spotter shall raise both arms straight above the head to indicate that it is all clear for the driver to proceed straight back.
 - b. Left Hand Turn: The spotter shall raise the right arm above the head and point to the left with the left arm.
 - c. Right Hand Turn: The spotter shall raise the left arm above the head and point to the right with the right arm.
 - d. Stop: The spotter shall cross both arms with fists closed above the head. Shout "STOP" to reinforce the signal.
6. Backing at Night:
- a. Signals shall be the same. The driver and spotter shall ensure rear spot lights of vehicle are turned on (if so equipped) and positioned in way to not blind the spotter.
 - b. Additional spotters shall be utilized wherever possible.
 - c. Maintain vigilance and awareness.
 - d. Utilize three short horn blasts before backing.
 - e. A flashlight may be carried, but at no time will it be directed toward mirror.
 - f. Vehicle maintenance note:
 - i. The practice of hosing vehicles down without drying shall be discontinued.
 - ii. Water spots compromise vision during backing and all roadway operations in general.

IV. REMEDIATION FOR BACKING INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

- 1. All involved members shall be tasked with review of this policy.
- 2. Remedial training shall include eight documented hours of hands-on backing exercises.
- 3. The driver and spotter shall submit a report through proper channels to the Training Bureau. The report shall include a summary of lessons learned from a minimum of three recent fire service line of duty deaths caused by improper apparatus backing.

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4. The Training Bureau shall assist in facilitating remedial training upon request from any member following a backing incident or accident.

V. DISCIPLINE FOR BACKING INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

1. Backing incidents and accidents may be considered at minimum a Class "C" rule violation after a proper investigation.
2. All violations shall be investigated thoroughly and objectively.
3. Only factual and relevant evidence shall be considered in applying disciplinary measures.
4. The Class "C" rule violation and suspension shall only be executed after proper investigation and recommendation at the discretion of the respective Battalion Chief, through proper channels to the Fire Chief.
5. Battalion Chiefs shall make recommendations for suspension if damages exceed \$5000.
6. Incidents or accidents that cause injury or damages that exceed \$10,000 may be considered a Class "D" rule violation after a proper investigation.
7. Dollar amounts for damages shall be determined by the Chief Mechanic or their designated collision repair specialist.
8. Backing accidents which cause major injuries resulting in partial or full disability or death may be considered a Class "E" rule violation after a proper investigation, to include ten shift suspension up to termination.
9. All members are entitled to union representation in incidents or accidents where disciplinary actions are possible.
10. Drug and Alcohol Testing, BU-11 MOA reminder:
 - a. Post-Accident Testing is required when an employee who is operating a personal, subsidized, or government vehicle or apparatus is involved in an on-duty accident which results in:
 - A fatality
 - Injury to any party requiring medical treatment away from the scene, and/or
 - Damage to any vehicle or apparatus requiring towing from the scene