

Fire Apparatus Backing Up Best Practice

Purpose: In the fire station or on scene, backing up presents a unique set of risks. This Best Practice aims to prevent injuries and deaths as well as property and equipment damage associated with fire apparatus back up maneuvers.

Practice:

1...Avoid backing up, unless absolutely necessary. It is safer to drive forward and follow street patterns returning to the station.

2...Pre-Trip Apparatus 360 performed by the driver to see conditions, hazards and understand the area into which they are backing up.

3...Activate emergency apparatus lights to warn other traffic of the intended truck movement and back up maneuver.

4...Back up only with a trained spotter. Avoid backing up alone unless absolutely necessary. Never back up until directed by the spotter. Sound horn to begin the maneuver.

5...Spotter must wear high visibility reflective vest. Recognized industry best practice.

6...Develop hand signals. Establish common hand signals directing the maneuver such as straight line reversing or turning, and stopping requirements. Each member of the fire department to be trained and expected to use adopted hand signals consistently.

7...Driver and spotter both to have radio contact. Never back up until directed by the spotter either by hand signals or radio contact.

8...Sound horn and begin back up maneuver at a rate of speed suitable for conditions. Never outrun the spotter.

9...Maintain constant eye contact between the driver and spotter. Any time eye contact is lost and the driver cannot see the spotter, or the driver is confused by hand signals, STOP and make verbal contact with spotter.

10...At night, illuminate the backup area. If apparatus do not have adequate back up lights, augment rear lighting with fixed truck mounted apparatus scene lighting.

11...At night, illuminate the spotter, who must wear a high visibility reflective vest, and use an illuminated traffic wand to direct the driver.

12...At the fire station, stop at the bay door threshold. Await spotter positioning inside the station. Do not back up until directed. Driver to sound horn before moving.