

NORTH BERRIEN FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Category: Apparatus & Driving

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Title: Vehicle Backing

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Policy: 09-207

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PURPOSE

When vehicles are required to back, emergency apparatus should make every attempt to have a spotter present. It is important that North Berrien Fire Rescue Department personnel make sure backing is avoided if possible and if mandatory, a spotter should be utilized. Standardizing the signals used will help with any confusion and make sure people clearly understand what is being communicated when backing a vehicle.

SAFETY CONCERN

When a vehicle is required to back up, make sure that there are no obstructions or hazards. Understanding the hand signs used when backing a vehicle will help reduce the potential for unnecessary injuries and damage.

GUIDELINE

General Rules

- If you can avoid backing, don't do it!
- Never be in a hurry when backing.
- If there is no spotter available:
 - o Reconsider backing up. Is it really necessary?
 - o Make a reasonable attempt to get someone to act as a spotter.
 - o If a spotter cannot be obtained, get out the unit and walk around the unit completing a "circle of safety" and survey the backing area. Before proceeding to back unit, being sure also check overhead clearance.
 - o Give a final warning of two horn blasts just prior to backing.

Driver Responsibilities

- Bring the unit to a complete stop.
- Roll window down completely.
- Make visual and verbal contact with the spotter. "If you cannot see or hear the spotter, do not backup!"
- Driver and spotter must establish and continue eye contact in the left rear view mirror at all times.
- Drivers must have a thorough knowledge of spotter hand signals.
- The spotter hand signals to the driver indicating it is safe to begin backing.
- The driver gives a two blast warning on the horn just prior to backing.

Spotter Responsibilities

- Conduct a "circle of safety" and survey the backing area and all other sides of the vehicle checking for hazards. Before proceeding to back unit, be sure to also check overhead clearance.
- Communicate any observed hazards to the driver.
- Place yourself eight to ten feet to the left rear of the unit.
- Establish visual and verbal contact with the driver and continue eye to eye contact in the left rear view mirror at all times.
- Be familiar with hand signals before allowing backing maneuvers to begin.

- Stop the driver if any hazards are observed or if you are uncertain of the direction that the driver is maneuvering.
- Flashlights should be used in low light conditions; however, at no time should the light be shined directly in/at the mirrors.

Attaching Diesel Exhaust System

When backing diesel apparatus into the bays (at a station equipped with a system) the following procedure should be followed

- Back apparatus with spotters as required by policy
- Engineer should stop apparatus at a point where the extractor hose can be safely installed. Never walk between the bay door and the apparatus while it is moving
- Place the extractor hose on the exhaust as recommended by the manufacturer and inflate the cuff. Engineer should not back apparatus while the hose is being attached
- Once the extractor hose is attached, make an acknowledgement with the driver to proceed to back the apparatus
- The driver of the apparatus must know where all people are that are near the side and the rear of the vehicle at all times. If there is an uncertainty of someone's whereabouts, stop the vehicle and make eye contact to confirm their location.
- Vehicles that are not properly equipped to accept the exhaust system should not be attached to the system to prevent any damage to the system or the vehicle.

Hand Signals

STRAIGHT BACK: One hand above the head with palm toward face waving back and the other hand at your side. (see figure 1)

TURN: Both arms pointing the same direction with index finger extended. (see figure2) Driver must verbally communicate with spotter with his/her intentions; the spotter will assist the driver in backing unit.

STOP: Both arms crossed with hands in fist. (see figure 3) Be sure to yell the STOP order loud enough for the driver to hear the warning.

