

## FIRE FIGHTERS GUIDANCE NOTE #1-3

### ISSUE:        **BACKING FIRE APPARATUS**

The following guidelines are for backing fire apparatus into Stations and for backing up required during the performance of fire fighting duties at emergency scene. This guidance note does not apply to traffic control that may be necessary for the protection of firefighters working at an emergency scene. It is recognized that under certain circumstances firefighters are required to request vehicles to stop, to either get fire apparatus back into a station or move an apparatus at an emergency scene. However, firefighters must not attempt to stop traffic unless it is absolutely necessary and essential to getting a vehicle back into service, or traffic conditions warrant this action.

When backing into a fire station is required, the following items are recommended:

It is recommended that the vehicle come to a **full** stop in front of the Station with the headlights, beacon ray and 4-way flashers turned **on**. This allows firefighters to dismount safely and assist the driver while backing up.

Firefighters posted on either side of the vehicle **but not on the roadway**, should assist the driver in determining when it is safe to pull onto the road. Flashlights can be used when visibility is poor. The duty of firefighters assisting in backing up is to control pedestrian traffic and by using agreed upon hand signals to assist the driver to back the vehicle onto the ramp and into the station. In some locations it may be necessary for firefighters to temporarily control the flow of traffic for their own protection. In these situations, ensure that the firefighters are in a safe position.

**Important:** To ensure the safety of firefighters, they must stay in full view of the apparatus operator while guiding the apparatus.

Where there are insufficient members of a vehicle crew available to assist the driver to back into a station and firefighters are on duty with a station, they should be summoned to provide the necessary assistance. Priority must be given to the safety of citizens and firefighters in any backing-up operation.

When backing, other than into a fire station, is required, the following additional items are recommended:

Avoid backing-up whenever possible. Plan ahead when parking, so backing-up is not necessary.

Where backing-up is unavoidable, use firefighters who move with the vehicle, and use the vehicle as shielding as much as possible.

Where firefighters are unavailable, drivers should dismount and walk completely around the vehicle, before backing-up, to ensure there are no unseen obstacles behind the apparatus.

Backing of Tankers during water shuttle operations is often unavoidable and must be done as carefully as possible to avoid accidents and injury. Consider the following:

- When possible, dump chutes should be positioned for dumping prior to the final backing to the Port-a-tank.
- Remote control of the dump valve from the side of the truck or from the cab should be considered so firefighters do not have to operate from the back of the vehicle.
- A Water Supply Officer (WSO) should be assigned to control the movement of tankers and keep firefighters clear of tankers when backing up.
- High visibility traffic vests should be use by firefighters assigned to direct tankers and/or operate filling or dumping operations.