



**TOWNSHIP OF UPPER PROVIDENCE
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
Standard Operating Guideline**

Backing of Emergency Vehicles

Operations General 400.08	Issued: 19-December-2017 Revised: N/A	Pages: 2 Revision 1
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Purpose: The purpose of this procedure is to limit the risks associated with backing emergency vehicles.

Scope: This policy will affect the Department, and all contract emergency service providers operating large emergency vehicles that are equipped with air brakes in Upper Providence Township.

General: Backing of emergency vehicles in any weather condition, day or night, can be extremely dangerous. The results of improperly backing of any vehicle can lead to serious vehicular damage, injury and even death. The intent of this policy is to greatly reduce the risks associated with a motor vehicle collision and/or the striking of pedestrians while operating an emergency vehicle in reverse.

Procedure

Before backing a fire department vehicle, the driver shall ensure that the intended path is clear of hazards or obstructions.

At least one vehicle spotter shall be employed as a guide when the vehicle is operated in reverse. When the spotter(s) will be working in/on a roadway, street, or similar thoroughfare; the spotter(s) shall wear a reflective highway safety vest for additional visibility. The spotter(s) shall carefully consider their safety. It is not the intent of this policy to place unnecessary risks on the spotter(s) causing injury or death.

- ***No spotter shall be employed under the age of 18 years.***
- At the driver's discretion, the use of two spotters can be assigned—one covering each side of the vehicle.
- At the driver's discretion and when available, a third spotter can be used to monitor traffic or, especially in the case of aerial apparatus, watch the front of the vehicle for overhead obstructions.

A spotter is responsible for guiding the driver and ensuring that any potential hazards are avoided. Standard signals shall be used to communicate with the driver during the backing maneuver; hand signals or voice signals transmitted over a portable radio can be employed for this purpose.

- The spotter shall direct the driver to stop at any time the backing maneuver cannot be completed safely.
- Provided weather conditions do not create a further hazard, the driver's window shall be open/rolled down for listening purposes while backing.
- The driver's headset, where applicable, shall be removed to accommodate listening for the spotter or other signs of a problem. In scenarios where radio communications are occurring through the headset, with the spotter, the driver shall cover only one ear with the headset to allow for listening with the uncovered ear.



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The spotter(s) shall be on the ground, to the rear of the vehicle, and shall remain visible to the driver at all times. **If the driver loses sight of the spotter(s) at any time, the driver shall immediately stop the vehicle.** Portable radios or tethered vehicle-mounted intercom systems are recommended for the spotters' safety. In no case are cameras or safety devices a substitute for a spotter. (NFPA 1500 requires at least one spotter to have contact with the driver.)

If it is essential to back a vehicle with limited rearward visibility and no spotter is available, the driver shall stop, dismount, and visually perform a 360-degree check around the vehicle before backing, with emphasis on the area behind and to both sides. After checking the area, the driver shall back the vehicle at slow speed and with extreme caution, prepared to stop immediately if necessary.

Vehicle

All vehicles covered by this policy shall be equipped with operable back-up warning devices that function automatically when the vehicle is placed into reverse.

When the vehicle will be backing into or onto a roadway, street, or similar thoroughfare; the vehicles visual warning devices shall be activated.

This policy supersedes any and all previous policies regarding the same topic.

This policy is hereby effective by order of the Chief of Fire and Emergency Services.

Signed: _____ Date: 12/19/2017