

BLACKWOOD FIRE COMPANY OPERATING GUIDELINE

4.6 APPARATUS BACKING POLICY

- 4.6.1 The backing of apparatus creates an elevated risk of personal injury and property damage. Therefore, this maneuver must be undertaken at very slow speed with extreme care. The safe backing of the apparatus is a shared responsibility between the driver, officer and guide(s). However, the driver bears the ultimate responsibility for his/her actions whenever the apparatus is in motion.
- 4.6.2 Prior to acting as a guide, members shall undergo an appropriate in-house training program and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the policies and procedures contained in this guideline.
- 4.6.3 Members acting as guides shall employ appropriate precautions to maximize their visibility and to protect themselves from passing traffic. When necessary, police officers and other emergency vehicles shall be utilized to assist. When necessary, guides should be attired in full PPE and/or an approved traffic safety vest. Hand lights may be utilized as needed, but shall not be directed toward the driver of the fire apparatus or other vehicles.
- 4.6.4 To facilitate verbal communications, the driver's side front window shall be fully opened before the apparatus is backed. If a second guide is used, the officer's side front window shall also be opened.
- 4.6.5 Whenever apparatus must be backed, a minimum of one guide will be utilized (staff vehicles exempted). Rear vision cameras shall be used to supplement the safe backing of the apparatus, but do not replace the need for a guide. See 4.6.15 for circumstances where a guide is unavailable.
- 4.6.6 The primary guide shall be positioned approximately 10' behind and slightly to the side of the apparatus, within clear view of the apparatus operator through the driver's side mirror. The purpose of the guide is to assist the driver in safely backing the apparatus by viewing the areas in the rear of the truck not visible to the driver, directing the apparatus away from any observed obstacles, and alerting pedestrians and vehicles of the backing apparatus.

- 4.6.7 The guide will direct the movement of the apparatus via standard hand signals (see Attachment 4.6). The guide will ensure the hand signals are plainly visible to the driver by using large, dramatic arm movements and holding his/her hands at or above head level. When possible, the guide will be equipped with a portable radio, which can be utilized as a secondary means of communication with the apparatus operator. If necessary to immediately stop the movement of the apparatus to avoid a collision, the guide shall issue a loud verbal "STOP" command in addition to the hand signal.
- 4.6.8 The guide will move back at the same pace as the truck, maintaining a clearance of approximately 10'. Under no circumstances will the guide ride on the rear of the apparatus while it is backing.
- 4.6.9 When backing the apparatus at night, the guide shall utilize the flashlight with orange traffic wand carried on each apparatus.
- 4.6.10 At the discretion of the driver and officer, additional guides may be deployed as necessary to assist with the safe backing of the apparatus. Two or more guides will be deployed, when available, whenever the apparatus is to be backed over a long distance, or through areas of minimal clearance. The second guide will be positioned at the officer side front corner of the vehicle, within clear view of the driver.
- 4.6.11 When two guides are utilized, the front guide will monitor the front and officer's side of the vehicle, while the rear guide will monitor the rear and driver's side of the apparatus. The rear guide will direct the movement of the apparatus, as per 4.6.6. Any of the guides may issue an order to stop the movement of the apparatus via verbal commands and hand signal if necessary to avoid a collision.
- 4.6.12 The apparatus operator and guide(s) will confer prior to the apparatus being backed, to ensure agreement on the path of apparatus movement. When necessary, the apparatus operator will dismount the apparatus and visually examine the area through which the apparatus will be backed.
- 4.6.13 The apparatus officer will determine the number of guides

needed to safely back the apparatus, based on prevailing conditions. Only those members authorized by the officer will dismount the apparatus.

- 4.6.14 If the apparatus operator loses site of the guide(s), the movement of the apparatus shall be stopped until the guide(s) is back in view.
- 4.6.15 Apparatus may be backed without a guide only if a qualified firefighter is not available to perform the task. Due to the risk involved, this maneuver shall only be performed when no other options are available. Prior to backing, the driver shall dismount the apparatus and physically check the path through which the apparatus will be backed for obstructions. If necessary, the driver shall periodically repeat this process during the backing process. If the driver does not feel the apparatus can be safely backed without a guide, he/she shall take the necessary steps to secure a qualified guide before backing the apparatus.
- 4.6.16 Apparatus warning lights shall be used whenever needed to warn approaching traffic of a backing apparatus.
- 4.6.17 Apparatus room lights will be turned on prior to backing an apparatus into the station.

STANDARD HAND SIGNALS

