

<b>GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICTS #2 AND #4</b>						
CHEWS LANDING FIRE DEPARTMENT / BLACKWOOD FIRE COMPANY						
JOINT OPERATING GUIDELINES						
TITLE:	<b>APPARATUS BACKING GUIDELINE</b>				NEW	REVISED
					X	
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NUMBER OF PAGES:	6	ISSUING AUTHORITY:		Chief Michael Millisky – 8201 Operation Commissioner Evans Chief Joseph Cipriano – 8401 Operations Commissioner Jones		

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this guideline is to outline proper safety practices to be used when backing Fire Department vehicles and maneuvering in close-quarters situations.

Through the use of the information provided in this joint operational guideline it is the intention to make every attempt to virtually eliminate the possibility of hitting a person, object, or other vehicles while backing or maneuvering in close-quarters. Therefore, all personnel will be expected to follow the guidelines contained in this document and, in addition, take all reasonable and necessary actions to comply with same. Hitting a person, object or other vehicle while backing a Fire Department vehicle is an unacceptable event.

This joint operational guideline supersedes any and all previously distributed policies or guidelines of both districts regarding apparatus backing.

**SCOPE:**

This guideline shall apply to all full-time career firefighters employed by both districts, all volunteer members of both Blackwood Fire Company and Chews Landing Fire Department including firefighters and any other member authorized to drive and/or guide apparatus.

**Guideline:**

- 21-001 The need to back a department vehicle will be avoided, when at all possible, by positioning the vehicle so to have a forward egress route. Attempt to avoid situations that require vehicle backing or close-quarter maneuvering such as dead ends, cul-de-sacs, and routine parking situations whenever possible.

The backing of apparatus creates an elevated risk of personal injury and property damage. Therefore, this maneuver must be undertaken at very slow speed and 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.

- 21-002 Prior to acting as a guide, members shall undergo an appropriate in-house training program and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the guideline and procedures contained in this document. All training shall be appropriately documented.
- 21-003 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. Personnel acting as guides shall at a minimum be in an ANSI approved traffic safety vest. Hand lights or traffic safety wands will be utilized during night time backing, and shall not be directed toward the driver of the fire apparatus or other vehicles.
- a. For personnel in any station acting as an apparatus guide, ANSI approved traffic safety vests shall be provided at each apparatus bay door.
- 21-004 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.
- 21-005 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 21-014 for circumstances where a guide is unavailable.
- 21-006 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.
- 21-007 The guide will direct the movement of the apparatus via standard hand signals (see Attachment). 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. If the apparatus operator

loses site of the guide(s), the movement of the apparatus shall be stopped and apparatus shall be taken out of reverse until the guide(s) is back in view.

The vehicle shall be immediately stopped and the driver shall take the apparatus out of gear and put it into neutral any time one of the following situations exists:

1. The driver loses sight of or breaks visual contact with the guide.
2. The driver is confused or unsure of the signals being provided by the guide.
3. The driver receives a visual, verbal or radio communication to stop.

The driver may continue backing the vehicle only after the above situations are corrected and the communication to continue backing is given by the guides.

21-008 The guide will move back at the same pace as the apparatus maintaining a clearance of approximately 10'. Under no circumstances will the guide ride on the rear of the apparatus while it is backing.

21-009 When backing the apparatus at night, or low lighted areas, the guide shall utilize the flashlight with orange traffic wand carried on each apparatus additionally, if the apparatus is equipped with side body lighting that is able to be operated while moving, the driver will activate the apparatus side body lights to assist with illumination of the area.

21-010 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.

21-011 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. 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.

- 21-012 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.
- 21-013 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.
- 21-014 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 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.
- 21-015 Apparatus warning lights shall be used whenever needed to warn approaching traffic of a backing apparatus.
- 21-016 Apparatus room lights will be turned on prior to backing an apparatus into the station when possible.
- 21-017 In the case of backing into the firehouse off any road the apparatus shall come to a complete stop on the apron of the station. Only the personnel acting as apparatus guides will dismount the apparatus while wearing an ANSI approved traffic safety vest. The apparatus driver will activate all lights and wait for traffic to stop. Once all traffic has come to a stop the apparatus will enter the road and stop. Only then will the apparatus guides enter the road to assist with traffic. If possible, the Chiefs vehicle or Battalions vehicle shall be used to replace personnel in the street.
- 21-017(A) (Station 82) In the case of backing into the firehouse off Somerdale Road the apparatus shall come to a complete stop in front of the station with all warning lights activated along with the traffic backing signs activated. ***Under no circumstances will any personnel dismount the apparatus.*** If possible, the Chiefs vehicle or Battalions vehicle shall be used to aid in a blocker position. Once traffic is stopped or clear, the apparatus will proceed to go into motion as to position itself across the roadway and prepare to back into appropriate apparatus bay. If for any reason traffic approaches the area the apparatus is to come to a complete stop and sound warning devices to get the attention of the other vehicle. If the vehicle proceeds through the area, the driver is to

wait until the area is clear once again before moving apparatus. As the apparatus is beginning to enter the bay, and still on the apron, the personnel acting as apparatus guides will dismount the apparatus while wearing an ANSI approved traffic safety vest.

21-018 Backing into stations with plymo-vent systems the apparatus guide has a dual role. The apparatus guide will guide the apparatus back far enough to connect the plymo-vent system. Once the apparatus guide signals the driver to stop so he/she can connect the exhaust system the apparatus driver shall take the apparatus out of gear and put it into neutral. The apparatus guide can then safely go behind the vehicle and connect the system. Once the apparatus guide has returned to the driver's side view the apparatus and signaled, he/she are ready to resume backing the apparatus may be put back into reverse and the backing maneuver can continue. If multiple guides are being used, the front guide can be used to connect the plymo-vent system while the back guide stays in the same position waiting for the driver to acknowledge the connection (officer side mirror). Once it's connected the driver places apparatus back in gear and proceeds back with the use of the guide. The guide will be completed once the apparatus is out of gear and parking brake applied.

# STANDARD HAND SIGNALS

