



Scarborough Fire Department

Scarborough, Maine



Standard Operating Guidelines

Book:	Routine Operations
Chapter:	Apparatus Operations
Subject:	2130 - Apparatus Backing & Spotting
Revision Date:	9/29/2005
Approved by:	<i>B. Michael Thurlow</i>

PURPOSE

This policy was developed to provide a standardized method for the safe backing of apparatus to eliminate injuries to personnel or the public, and to reduce the potential for damage to apparatus, equipment or stations.

POLICY

All operators of Scarborough Fire Department apparatus shall follow this policy at all times when backing apparatus.

PROCEDURE

- A. The operator of an apparatus shall attempt to position the apparatus to minimize the need to back up whenever possible.
- B. Whenever an apparatus needs to be backed up, either into a station or at an incident scene or training session, the driver shall deploy one spotter to guide and monitor the safe movement of the apparatus when personnel are available.
 - a. In situations where there are no other members riding on the apparatus, a member of the department that is in the station shall perform the spotters duty.
 - b. If there are no personnel riding on the apparatus and no one is available in the station the operator shall exercise extreme caution while backing without a spotter.
- C. If a driver loses sight of the spotter he/she shall immediately stop the apparatus until they are back in visual contact.
- D. The apparatus should be backed at a slower than normal rate so the spotter can be safely monitored for signals.
- E. The spotter shall maintain visual contact with the driver at all times.
- F. At night the spotter should position one of the rear spotlights on themselves or use a flashlight to help the driver see them. DO NOT point the flashlight directly in the driver's mirror as this may cause temporary blindness.
- G. The spotter should use exaggerated hand signals to direct the driver so the spotters directions are clear when viewed through the driver's mirror.
- H. The spotter should be positioned so that they can be easily seen, but far enough away from the apparatus to avoid injury during the backing process.

- I. The operator shall remove his/her headset and lower the driver's window to the maximum opening position when backing to facilitate direct voice communications with the spotter.
- J. The use of portable radios may be advantageous during certain situations.
- K. The operator shall use the back up camera system, on those apparatus that have it, as another tool to assist in safely backing the apparatus. Use of the back up camera system does not negate the need for a spotter, or complying with other sections of this policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Driver Responsibilities

- a. The driver is responsible for the operation of the vehicle and its personnel. The Officer is responsible for following and enforcing policies and procedures.
- b. The driver must be in control of the vehicle and therefore responsible for its movement. He/she should not move the vehicle until one spotter has been deployed in a backing situation.
- c. If the driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she is responsible to stop the vehicle until they are back in his/her sight.
- d. If at any time the driver feels that the situation is not safe, he/she should stop the vehicle until the situation is corrected. This may mean getting out and physically walking around the vehicle and down the road to where the vehicle is headed.

B. Spotter Responsibilities

- a. To maintain visual contact in the line of sight with the driver at all times.
- b. To direct the driver while backing up the apparatus.
- c. To be constantly aware of the surroundings while performing this function.
- d. To be constantly looking and listening for other vehicles and people that may enter the path of the apparatus that is backing up.
- e. To stop any oncoming hazard or to signal the driver to stop backing the apparatus whenever there is a potential for an injury or incident.
- f. To be aware of hazards at ground level and also for overhead obstructions such as tree branches, wires, signs, canopies, etc.

DEFINITIONS

- A. Apparatus – refers to all pumpers, aerials, rescue units, squad trucks, command vans, tank trucks, and trailers in tow.
- B. Operator – the driver of an apparatus.
- C. Spotter – an individual that is directing the operator while backing.

REFERENCES

- A. NFPA 1451
- B. NFPA 1002