

Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9
Westlake Fire Department
Standard Operating Guideline

Subject: Backing Fire Apparatus

Effective Date: June 15, 1997

Authorized By: Chief Paul Barker

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I. Purpose

To establish a policy and procedure for backing apparatus, vehicles and the use of the Station Exhaust System.

II. Policy

- A. Extreme care should be used when backing. If at all possible, avoid backing a vehicle even if this requires circling the block. A back-up guide must be used at all times. If you are alone and no assistance is available, stop the vehicle while backing, exit, and check your clearances and for obstructions frequently.
- B. In all non-emergency situations, a backup guide shall be used each time a Department apparatus or specialized vehicle is backed up. In emergency situations, a guide shall be used if at all possible.
- C. Vehicles without compartment bodies and with a load rating of "one ton" or less may be backed up without a guide provided appropriate caution is followed.
- D. When backing apparatus away from the stations where the backing area is unfamiliar, personnel will use the headset connection on the rear of the apparatus, if it is installed.

III. Procedure

A. Backing with a Guide.

- 1. The person who is to serve as the backup guide shall not get off the apparatus until it has come to a complete stop. If on a public street, the backup guide shall wear a helmet or traffic vest.
- 2. If at all possible, the backup guide shall operate from the driver's side of the apparatus and be visible in the side rear view mirror.
- 3. If backing at night, the apparatus spotlights should be aimed to the rear. A hand light shall also be used but should not be shined at the mirrors.
- 4. The driver will not shift the apparatus into reverse until the backup guide is in position and gives the signal to begin backing up.

5. The guide will continuously check the clearance above, below, and on each side of the apparatus. If the backing vehicle is negotiating a turn of any kind, the backer shall stop the vehicle periodically and check the blind side (right passenger side) for obstructions.
6. If more than one backup guide is being used, the driver should receive signals from only one guide at a time. Be careful to avoid confusing the driver.
7. The following standard hand signals will be used to direct the driver:
 - a) **Straight Back:** One hand above the head with palm toward face, waving back.
 - b) **Turn:** Both arms pointing the same direction with index fingers extended. (Point in the direction the rear of the apparatus needs to go.)
 - c) **Stop:** both arms above head with palms open toward driver.

B. Backing Without a Guide

1. Any apparatus or vehicle that normally requires a back-up guide may be backed without a guide in an emergency situation if a guide is not available. Before backing, the driver must get out of the unit, walk to the rear and check for obstacles behind the vehicle. You may use a civilian as a guide in an emergency, but make sure they are calm and collected. In this circumstance, remember that they are not trained, you may not recognize their hand signals, and they may get excited. The ultimate responsibility for the vehicle remains with you.
2. It is a fact that 85% of industrial accidents involving trucks occur during backing and that is why our SOG insists that you get a spotter whenever it is feasible. If it is not feasible, we do not need to be running vehicles across the District just to help someone back a truck into a bay; but we do need to exercise extreme caution as described in the procedure above to assure that all reasonable safety precautions are taken.
3. It will always be preferable to have a spotter when backing, so plan ahead. If you are clearing a call where another member of the Department has responded, ask one of the individuals on scene to stop by the station to assist you.
4. When backing into the stations alone, and it may be inconvenient to get someone to come by the station to help you—for example, the middle of the night or when brining a vehicle back from the shop while everyone is out on a call. The following procedures should be followed when you are backing alone into the stations:
 - Align the engine in front of the bay (at least ten feet from the bay door), stop, and set the brake.
 - Set the brake, exit the truck, and verify your alignment with the bay
 - Walk to the back of the truck, assure that nothing has been placed in front of the bay while you were out. Turn on bay lighting and use additional truck lighting if needed.

- Back the truck carefully to the point where the exhaust system needs to be connected.
- Set the brake, exit again, verify your alignment, connect the exhaust system, and again check to see someone hasn't left something on the bay floor while you were out.
- Set the brake and exit the truck again, if necessary, to confirm your position.
- Back the truck VERY CAREFULLY into its final position and set the brake.

C. Exhaust System Use (applies to both stations and all apparatus)

1. Departing from the Station:

- Press the red power button located on the wall in the station. This will turn on the exhaust system.
- Start the apparatus engine (do not start any on-board generators until out of the bay).
- Pull out of the bay slowly, the exhaust hose will disconnect automatically. If you exit too fast, the hose will slam into the wall and cause damage.
- On-board generators may be started after pulling completely out of the bay.

2. Returning to the Station:

- Back the apparatus onto the apron and turn off any on-board generators prior to entering the bay.
- Press the red power button located on the wall in the station. This will turn on the exhaust system.
- Back the apparatus until the exhaust pipe is even with the bay door.
- Stop the apparatus and attach the exhaust system hose to the side of the apparatus.
- Finish backing the apparatus into the bay.
- Allow engine the proper amount of "cool down" for superchargers (usually 2-3 minutes) if needed.
- Turn off the apparatus engine.

3. Medic 21

- The Westlake Fire Department requires Medic 21 to use the exhaust system at all times to protect the health and safety of the personnel housed at Station 2.
- WFD will supply (at no charge) the mounting plate for attaching the exhaust hose to A/TC EMS for installation on Medic 21.
- WFD acknowledges the exhaust system may not be available if Medic 21 is out of service and a reserve ambulance is used.