

# LAKWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

SOG NUMBER: 201.03	SAFETY AND HEALTH
DATE IMPLEMENTED: FEBRUARY 10, 2020 DATE REVISED:	TITLE: BACKING APPARATUS

## **PURPOSE:**

To ensure safe driving practices when backing District owned or leased apparatus so as to minimize personal injury to firefighters and civilians and property damage to apparatus, other vehicles, stations and other structures.

## **SCOPE:**

This guideline shall apply to all personnel who operate apparatus and other support and utility vehicles used for suppression, rescue or specialized function (generally, not a common type passenger vehicle, i.e. SUV, cars, etc.), and applies to all circumstances where apparatus and other vehicles are required to back up.

## **RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of the Fire Department Officer (Acting Officer) to enforce compliance with this guideline and the safe backing of the apparatus.

All crew members must share responsibility for safe backing operations.

## **GENERAL:**

Backing of fire department apparatus should be avoided whenever possible.

Where backing is unavoidable, follow the procedures outlined in this guideline, and back up the least amount necessary to accomplish the maneuver.

Whenever backing the apparatus, the operator shall utilize at least one or more spotter(s) to watch for vehicles, people, or other obstructions especially in areas "blind" to the operator.

When backing an apparatus, the following rules shall be followed:

1. Spotters(s) will dismount vehicle prior to backing.
2. Rear mounted backing cameras shall not be used in place of a spotter.
3. Spotters shall position themselves to be in visual contact with the apparatus driver.

4. When only one spotter is used, he/she will be positioned at the rear of the apparatus, in view of the operator.
5. Spotter shall survey around the vehicle to identify potential obstacles, including overhead obstructions.
6. Multiple spotters may be required in certain areas and all members performing spotting duties should be aware of traffic hazards in the backing area.
7. Under no circumstances is it acceptable for anyone to walk behind the apparatus and out of the line of sight of the driver while backing.
8. Spotters shall not ride on the tailboard, steps or any exposed position of backing apparatus.
9. The operator shall roll the driver's side window down completely.
10. The operator shall make both verbal and visual contact with the spotter. If the operator cannot see the spotter, he/she must not move the apparatus. The operator and the spotter must maintain direct visual contact.
11. Spotters should use verbal commands, agreed upon hand signals, and portable radios to communicate with the apparatus driver.
12. The use of portable radios to communicate between the spotter and the operator may prove beneficial in certain circumstances i.e. loud environments (use operations channel).
13. All available means shall be used by the operator to view the area behind the Apparatus i.e. Mirrors, backup cameras but not as a replacement for a spotter.

The operator must stop immediately if he/she loses visual contact with a spotter.

14. Where apparatus must be backed where other vehicle traffic exists, day or night. The officer and crew shall dismount the apparatus and act as spotters, the apparatus emergency lights (if equipped with such lights) shall be operating, and traffic safety vests and/or turnout coat with visible retroreflective and fluorescent trim shall be worn by all spotters.
15. While backing at night, flash lights and (where applicable) accessory rear lighting should be used.
16. The operator is in control of the apparatus and therefore responsible for its movement. He/she should not move the apparatus until all spotters have been deployed, and are in position in a backing situation.
17. When more than one spotter is being used, the operator will need to maintain contact with both of them. This means shifting his/her attention from one spotter to another frequently so as to safely move the apparatus.
18. If at any time the operator feels that the situation is not safe, he/she should stop the apparatus until the situation is corrected. This may mean getting out and walking round the

apparatus and down the road where the apparatus is headed.

19. When backing into roadways or traffic, extreme caution must be exercised to ensure that all cross traffic is stopped prior to entering the roadway.
20. In congested or tight areas, the whole crew may be needed as spotters, including the Department Officer.
21. In congested or tight areas, one spotter may be needed at the rear and one at the front of the apparatus being moved either forward or backwards and the Department Officer to act as safety.
22. Spotters should also be used when going forward in tight areas, to avoid hitting objects.

Under circumstances where the apparatus is manned by only a driver, the driver should attempt to utilize any available Fire Department personnel to act as a spotter. Caution shall be used if spotters are dismounting near moving traffic. The apparatus shall be positioned in a manner to stop all traffic to allow spotters to safely dismount the apparatus.