
Ocean City Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines

Safety

Subject: Backing and Use of Spotters

Revised: 15 September 2018

Approved: 18 December 2018

Effective: 1 February 2019

Section: 706.00

706.01 Purpose

To establish a guideline to provide maximum protection for personnel, members of the public, and property during the backing of Department vehicles.

706.02 Definitions

For the purpose of this guideline, a “service vehicle” means any means any vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the Town of Ocean City or the Ocean City Volunteer Fire Company, Incorporated.

706.03 Scope

- A. This guideline shall apply to all members operating in any or all capacities of their duties in day-to-day activities and emergency operations.
- B. This guideline does not apply to service vehicles that are normally occupied by one member, such as supervisory vehicles. This exemption does not relieve the driver from using the care necessary to avoid striking objects or persons while backing a service vehicle. Further, the backing guidelines described herein should be followed whenever it is practical.
- C. This guideline does not apply to service vehicles used for EMS transport when patient care duties prevent a crew member from functioning as a spotter. This exemption does not relieve the driver from using the care necessary to avoid striking objects or persons while backing a service vehicle. Further, the backing guidelines described herein should be followed whenever practical.

706.04 General Guidelines

- A. Avoid backing when possible.
- B. Never be in a hurry when backing.
- C. Make all reasonable attempts to have someone act as a spotter.
- D. If a spotter cannot be obtained, get out of the vehicle and complete a 360 degree walk-around of the vehicle and survey the backing area. Be sure also to check for overhead clearance.
- E. When backing into fire stations, members acting as spotters shall not exit the service vehicle, or position themselves in the roadway. Members shall exit the service vehicle on the curbside. Members shall position themselves initially on the sidewalk to alert pedestrian

traffic. One member shall act as the spotter on the driver's side, guiding the service vehicle completely into the fire station. If an additional member is available, they shall position themselves on the officer's side watching the officer's front corner of the service vehicle.

706.05 Procedure

A. Driver Responsibilities:

1. Bring the service vehicle to a complete stop.
2. Roll down the driver's window completely to increase the ability to hear the spotter.
3. Make visual contact with the spotter. If the driver cannot see the spotter, the vehicle shall NOT be moved.
4. Driver and spotter must establish and maintain eye contact using the driver's side mirror.
5. The spotter shall utilize hand signals or provide verbal instruction using the radio to indicate it is safe to begin backing.
6. The spotter shall utilize hand signals or provide verbal instruction using the radio to indicate it is safe to stop backing.

B. Spotter Responsibilities:

1. Conduct a 360-degree walk-around of the vehicle and survey the backing area while checking all sides of the vehicle for any hazards, to include overhead clearance.
2. Communicate any hazards observed to the driver/operator.
3. Position themselves eight to ten feet to the drivers' side rear of the vehicle.
4. Establish visual and/or verbal contact with the driver and continue to maintain eye contact with the driver.
5. Stop the driver if any hazards are observed, or if you are uncertain of the direction that the driver is maneuvering.