

Motor Vehicle Professional Standards Backing Policy



GUIDELINES

PURPOSE: Adopt a proactive management system for backing procedure policy

MIIA recommends that all municipalities implement a “backup” policy while operating a city or town owned vehicle. All employees should be provided with a copy of the policy and the municipality should maintain a signature on file noting that the policy was received.

POLICE:

Adopt a policy that requires all police vehicles to be backed in while at police headquarters.

Officers who are out on patrol should always back their vehicles up when parking or position their vehicle to avoid a collision. The high risk of an emergency call for service and not having to backup can reduce the potential of a collision, as the officers eyes are focused on what’s in front of them rather than what’s behind them.

Here’s a real life example of why this is so important. A police officer was walking in the parking lot of police headquarters heading into work. An officer, who left a few minutes earlier from his tour of duty, backed up his personal vehicle and struck the other officer breaking his leg.

A general order was issued the next day that all personal vehicles parked on City property would be required to back their vehicles into a parking spot. The G.O. was to ensure that someone exiting a parking spot would have a much clearer view going forward, rather than backing up. Today, most vehicles are equipped with backup cameras and sonar, helping to reduce the risk of a collision. In an emergency situation, with adrenaline rush, we want to establish that all police vehicles adopt this policy and back into a parking space to reduce the risk of a collision.

MOTOR VEHICLE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BACKING POLICY



FIRE:

If there are two people in the cab of a fire truck or ambulance, the passenger should exit the vehicle and assist the driver in backing. Spotters are a proven method of avoiding collisions, but spotters can be at risk for injury or death. As a safety precaution, ensure the driver and spotter agree on hand signals before backing. Instruct the spotter to always maintain visual contact with the driver while the vehicle is backing. Drivers should **STOP** the vehicle if they lose sight of the spotter. High visibility clothing should be worn by the spotters especially during nighttime operations.

If there is only one person within the cab they should use all the tools available to backup safely. This includes using backup cameras. For vehicles not equipped with a backup camera, we recommend purchasing aftermarket cameras.

If a spotter can't be used then the driver should get out of the vehicle and walk around it, completing a 360 degree circle of the vehicle to survey the backing area, making sure overhead clearance is okay, and there are no overhead obstructions.

To allow for maximum communication and visibility, make sure the driver and passenger windows are open.

The driver should use painted lines at the station inside and outside to line up the engine to backup straight. Markers inside the bay of the Fire Department can be implemented to alert when to stop.

DPW:

DPW drivers should adapt similar backing policies with guidelines and training in place. If the department is small and doesn't have the workforce for a spotter, the driver should exit the vehicle before backing and conduct a 360 degree inspection around the vehicle to assure backing safety. When pulling into a garage, the driver should use the mirrors and assure proper distances on both sides of the vehicle. If needed, painted lines should be added to the garage bay to serve as a guide. If the department is larger and has the resources, a spotter should always be used. For vehicles not equipped with a backup camera, we recommend purchasing aftermarket cameras.

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PROXIMITY DETECTION SYSTEMS:

During backing, radar and ultrasonic technology are both being used to alert the driver with a visual or audible warning. As the driver gets closer to an object the tone generates a more rapid beep followed by a steady tone when a collision will occur.

If you are unsure of your backing due to poor lighting or weather conditions, stop the vehicle and check the surroundings behind you before proceeding. Making good decisions should always be applied to avoid a collision.

OSHA only recommends a spotter for safety purposes. **MIIA** recommends that a backup policy be implemented to avoid a collision as much as possible. Studies have shown that a third of all backing collisions are for Police and Fire Departments. From a risk management perspective, it's recommended that a backup policy be adopted and enforced.

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