TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Driving: Backing Mistakes Are Costly

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

FOCUS: The recent tragedy involving a bridge collapse has brought to light that many of the nation's bridges are of concern from a structural standpoint. This can create response problems for emergency responders.

CHALLENGE

Backing is an every day activity for firefighters. Not surprisingly, a significant number of vehicle incidents involve backing. Backing accidents result in damages to our vehicle, buildings, equipment and occasionally to other firefighters.

As professionals, we have determined that the best practice when backing is to use a "spotter". Many departments have established this practice as a policy. Yet backing accidents continue to happen. Accident investigations reveal that one of the most common reasons for not using spotters is the lack of available personnel. Another reason provided is firefighters often don't feel there is time to locate personnel to assist them.

Due to the size and value of our emergency equipment, we must put additional emphasis on our backing procedures. Not only should we make greater attempts to ensure someone is designated in the capacity of "spotter" but also provide appropriate training.

The training will ensure that there is coordinated communications between the driver and spotter. Additionally, the use of radio communications and the correct position of the spotter will ensure that emergency equipment is not damaged when backing.

DISCUSSION

- Have you been involved in a backing accident or near miss?
- How extensive was the damage?
- Were you using a spotter, if not why not?
- Did you use radio to communicate?
- What was the result of the accident investigation?
- Do you believe this decision supported department policy, why?
- What are the safety precautions that must be taken to safely back emergency equipment?
- How can we strengthen our safe backing procedures?
- Has the department discussed the "cost" of repairs to equipment and apparatus due to backing incidents?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

Copyright August 31, 2006 WHA Insurance
For additional Safety Drill material call 1-800-852-6140 PDT
Or email info@whainsurance.com
Ask for public entity safety coordinator