

**Chapter III Fire Department Vehicles**

**Subject 2 Driving and Operation**

**302.01 Objective**

To provide procedures for safe and efficient operation of Fire Department vehicles.

**302.03 Definitions**

A **preventable accident** is defined as any occurrence involving a City owned or personal vehicles being used on city business, which results in property damage and/or personal injury in which everything reasonably possible to prevent the accident was not performed.

**302.05 Policy**

Members driving Fire Department vehicles are bound by all laws, ordinances and regulations set forth in Ohio State Law, City of Cincinnati Ordinances and the Fire Department Procedure Manual.

**302.07 Driving**

- A. The Fire Department's policy of Defensive Driving shall be observed at all times.
- B. Drivers shall adjust to road, traffic and weather conditions.
- C. The company officer shall make a visual check of apparatus to be certain that members are in position before boarding the apparatus. The driver will only proceed when signaled by the officer that he has acknowledged everyone is in a seated position with seatbelts fastened and it is safe to place the apparatus in motion. If visitors are in quarters, the officer will make certain visitors are not on apparatus or in harms way before placing apparatus in motion.
- D. At no time shall any city vehicle be moved, repositioned or driven with any door open. It will be incumbent upon the company officer and FAO to ensure that the apparatus is safe before it is placed in motion at any time.
- E. All safety precautions will be observed when operating the aerial of Ladder Companies, and during pump operations of Engine Companies.
- F. In all cases where a Fire Department vehicle strikes any person, object, or another vehicle, the incident will be considered a vehicle accident and all appropriate investigations and documentation will take place.

Vital information is stored in the vehicle computer box which may need to be recovered after a vehicle accident. After an accident a: Turn off the vehicle

ignition and do not move the vehicle; b: notify the City Garage and Apparatus & Equipment Captain to request that the vehicle be towed **when one or more of the following occurs:**

- 1) The accident involves loss of human life or bodily injury to any person who, as a result of the injury, receives emergency medical treatment away from the scene of the accident.
- 2) The driver receives a citation under state or local law for a moving traffic violation arising from the accident.
- 3) One or more motor vehicles incurring disabling damage as the result of the accident, requiring the motor vehicle to be towed away from the scene.
- 4) The accident causes damage to property other than a motor vehicle and the investigating supervisor reasonably believes that the property damage is of an amount greater than \$5,000.00.
- 5) Any other reasonable situation the investigating supervisor deems necessary.

G. Any operation or movement of a Fire Department vehicle in an unsafe manner constitutes a major safety violation.

H. All remote door controls shall be mounted on the sun visor on the officers side of the apparatus, under no circumstances shall they be kept on the dash board. When all members are safely on board and the door is fully open, the officer shall permit the driver to proceed out of the house. The officer shall operate the remote control to close the door when the apparatus is clear of the door.

For safety and security all bay doors shall be kept in the fully closed position at all times when the apparatus is not leaving or entering the bay.

Apparatus should not be parked across the sill of an apparatus bay door opening.

If an apparatus bay door is manually stopped in a partially open position, and you wish to fully open the door with the remote control the door may either close or open when the remote control is activated. Therefore, at no time should an apparatus bay door be allowed to remain in a partially open position.

Remote controls should only be pressed until the door starts to move, and then released. If the button is held down, the manual "Stop" button will not stop door travel. Safety edges, which are installed on some doors, will not stop door travel if the remote control button is not released.

Any overhead apparatus door that is found to be working improperly will be placed OOS and will not be used until approved for use by City Facility Maintenance or an overhead door contractor. Officers will notify the Captain of Fire Facilities at-6222 immediately during business hours to schedule repair of the door. The District Fire Chief and the Fire Facilities Supervisor should

also be notified for follow-up on the door repair

During the weekends and after business hours, the District Chief must be notified of the malfunctioning bay door. The District Chief shall try to make arrangements for a temporary solution or notify dispatch for emergency repairs if warranted. If a temporary solution is adequate, the Fire Facility Supervisor will be notified on the next business day to schedule repair of the door.

- I. **Members shall respond in a seated position with seatbelt in service.** Members shall not stand or sit on back platform, front bumper, or side running boards for any reason when the apparatus is in motion.
- J. Cables, skid chains, and salt shall be carried on all apparatus, ready for service from November 1st to April 1st.

If the officer or driver deems it necessary to place cables, skid chains, or “Onspots” in service due to snow or ice conditions, they shall notify Fire Dispatch of “slippery streets” conditions so that it can be transmitted to all companies. After “slippery streets” has been transmitted, all companies shall be required to install chains or cables immediately.

Apparatus equipped with “Onspot” chains may engage them to return to quarters, and then install the appropriate chains or cables. “Onspot” chains are only to be used when companies are out of quarters at the time that slippery street conditions are made known. **Never engage “Onspots” in conjunction with cables or chains.** Following installation of cables, skid chains, or “Onspots”, a company officer can determine when road conditions are safe enough to remove them. When skid chains or “Onspots” are in service, the maximum speed is 35 MPH. Any cross links broken while driving will be tied back immediately to prevent apparatus damage. Broken cross links are to be replaced immediately upon return to quarters.

- K. Apparatus shall always be parked in park or neutral if not equipped with park gear, with parking or maxi brake set. Chock blocks shall be used anytime the apparatus is parked out of quarters.
- L. When making an emergency response, all warning lights and siren shall be operating. Vehicles equipped with air horns will use air horn with discretion to clear intersections and heavy traffic.
- M. When making an emergency response, emergency vehicles are given the right to proceed "with caution" through red traffic signals and stop signs. The driver and officer may accept a signal from a uniformed police officer that the way is clear and proceed with caution. Fire Department officers and drivers shall observe the following rules when approaching street intersections.

If the traffic signal is GREEN, or opposing traffic is controlled by a "Stop" sign, or is not regulated, the vehicle shall:

- 1) Slow down to a speed where a complete stop can be made within the clear distance ahead.

- 2) Enter intersection only when certain it is safe.
- 3) Resume speed only when it is safe to do so.

If the traffic signal is RED or there is a "Stop" sign for your direction, the vehicle shall:

- 1) **Come to a complete stop** before entering the intersection. Check all traffic lanes to make sure no vehicles or pedestrians are moving on a collision course with the apparatus.
- 2) Enter the intersection only after it is safe to do so and proceed with caution.
- 3) Resume speed only when it is safe to do so.

- N. The officer will determine the best response route and direct the driver in safe operation of the vehicle. However, the officer must allow the driver to use good judgment as to safe operation. The officer cannot tell the driver how fast to go, but can tell him how slow to go
- O. Passing another apparatus en route to an emergency is permitted only if the driver of the lead apparatus signals that it is safe to pass.

**P. Stopping for a School Bus:**

When a school bus is stopped on a roadway to pick up or drop off passengers, the following regulations apply to all drivers on the roadway including drivers of emergency vehicles:

- 1) When a school bus driver is preparing to stop the bus, he or she activates four amber lights – two on the front and two on the back-of the bus. These lights continue to flash until the bus is fully stopped. Other vehicles are not required to stop during this preliminary stage, but should prepare to stop as soon as the bus comes to a complete stop. When the bus comes to a complete stop, the amber lights stop flashing and four red lights – two in front and two in back – start flashing while the children enter or leave the bus. In addition, a stop sign with a flashing red light is extended beneath the driver's window on the left side of the bus.
- 2) If the bus is stopped on a street or road which has **fewer than 4 (four) lanes**, all traffic approaching the bus from either direction must stop at least 10 (ten) feet from the front or rear of the bus. Remain stopped until the bus begins to move or the bus driver signals motorists to proceed.
- 3) If the bus is stopped on a street or road which **has 4 (four) or more lanes**, only traffic proceeding in the same direction as the bus must stop.

Emergency vehicles are given the right to proceed "with caution" through red traffic signals and stop signs. Fire Department officers and drivers shall

observe the following rules when approaching buses with red flashing lights and “STOP SIGN” deployed:

- a) Come to a complete stop 10 feet behind the bus. Before passing the bus, check all traffic lanes to make sure no vehicles or pedestrians are moving on a collision course with the apparatus.
- b) Pass the bus only after it is safe to do so, and the bus’s red flashing lights have stopped or the driver has signaled the apparatus to go around, and proceed with caution.
- c) Resume speed only when it is safe to do so.
- d) The driver and officer may accept a signal from a uniformed police officer that the way is clear and proceed with caution.

### **302.09 Apparatus Placement**

- A. Caution must be used when parking the apparatus at an emergency scene. Each situation must be assessed with safety and future actions to be considered. Place the apparatus where it can be utilized to its maximum operational advantage without hindering other apparatus to do the same. Correct apparatus placement strengthens the overall fireground operation by expanding the capabilities of all the companies on the scene. Remember, properly functioning hoses bend, properly functioning ladders do not. Pumper drivers need to be aware of not only the best place to park their own apparatus but also where all responding ladder companies will need to park in order to be most effective.
- B. In most **FIRE** situations the pumper should be placed past the fire building or before the building to allow access to the fire building by another apparatus, if needed. When placing the apparatus consideration must be given to the possibility of building collapse or any other situation where the apparatus may be put in jeopardy.
- C. In most **EMS** situations the apparatus should be placed before the building or accident scene. This will allow access for the medic unit to pull in front of the apparatus and provide protection from traffic when loading the patient.
- D. In all situations, the driver and officer must confer to place the apparatus in the best position to accomplish the best outcome to the incident, while preparing for the safe approach of other responding vehicles. Officers and drivers should place the apparatus so as to be easily visible to approaching vehicles, apparatus or medic units, taking into consideration dips, hills and curves in the roadway, as well as other obstructions to visibility such as low tree branches, sun glare or smoke.
- E. Apparatus not being used directly in the fire attack should be parked to prevent congestion but also placed so it can be moved into operating position if needed.
- F. When an apparatus is on the scene of a highway emergency it should be

placed in a position to protect the scene and those members working on the scene. Members working on any roadway or in an area where there may be moving traffic will wear the required high visibility vest, jacket, or full turn out gear. See Operations Manual section 203.18 for the complete policy on apparatus placement on roadways.

### 302.11 Backing Procedures

- A. Company officers shall **not** permit the backing of the apparatus in the street, except at locations where there is no intersecting street within reasonable distance, or if there is no outlet to the street.
- B. When permitting the backing of apparatus, the officer shall see that “spotters” protect the apparatus by guiding the driver. They shall not, however, place members in traffic lanes if they might be struck by moving vehicles. All members must remember that spotters are in place to give guidance to the driver on direction to turn and when to stop the apparatus; **NOT** to place themselves in the path of other vehicles.
- C. Operators and other members must realize that noise may keep them from hearing verbal instructions. Operators **shall stop** when there is any doubt, or in the absence of clear vision, or positive directions from the members guiding them.
- D. When backing-up apparatus the “spotters” will take a radio from the apparatus to communicate with the driver. The radio shall **ONLY** be used to notify the driver to **“STOP IMMEDIATELY”**.
- E. Hand signals shall be limited to the following:
  - 1) One hand, fingers together and extended, moving back and forth to indicate to continue moving in reverse with the other arm fully extended pointing in the direction that the spotter wants THE BACK OF THE APPARATUS TO GO. Spinning your finger around in circles at a driver looking in a mirror serves no purpose whatsoever and only adds confusion to the operation.
  - 2) An arm extended toward the driver with a closed fist indicates that the driver should stop.
- F. Spotter’s responsibilities while backing:
  - 1) The officer and members assigned to “spotter” duties shall switch their radios and the apparatus radio to an appropriate channel before they dismount the apparatus. The officer will ensure that all members are on the same appropriate channel before the backing process begins. This way the driver will be able to hear urgent commands through his headset. Drivers and other members must realize that noise may keep them from hearing verbal instructions.
  - 2) The officer’s radio shall be on the appropriate channel and shall monitor Fire Dispatch simultaneously.

- 3) Members assigned the “spotter” duties shall remain in the sight of the FAO or officer’s mirror. Members are not traffic officers. One member shall be in the sight of the FAO through each mirror when manpower permits. The officer shall be positioned in the front area of the vehicle in full view of the FAO and out of traffic. Members will be courteous to other vehicle drivers.
  - 4) Two firefighters shall be assigned to watch the rear of the apparatus when manpower permits. One firefighter shall be assigned to each corner while maintaining a safe distance from the apparatus and remaining in visual contact with the FAO.
  - 5) The FAO **shall stop the apparatus immediately** when there is any doubt and/or upon the loss of visual contact with any spotter.
- G. Officers shall **not** permit the turning or backing of apparatus which will cause damage to apparatus, hose, driveways or other property.
- H. Members shall not be used to stop traffic when backing into the Fire Station. Members assigned to the “spotter” position shall be dropped off on the station apron. The apparatus warning lights shall be used to stop traffic. No member shall place themselves in harms way when backing apparatus.
- I. The preferred method to return apparatus to quarters is to “drive through” the Fire Station, back to front when possible.
- J. Drivers shall observe conditions around the vehicle to determine if any obstacles exist. If no other member is present to assist the driver as a guide while backing up, the driver should get out of the vehicle and survey conditions around the vehicle to determine if any obstacles exist. Driver’s are to utilize mirrors while backing up and proceed slowly and cautiously, allowing adequate time to react and respond to hazards that come into view. The full use of warning lights shall be utilized while backing up.
- K. The company officer has the responsibility of ensuring that proper backing procedures are used and the backing process is done in a safe manner.
- L. The proper backing procedures shall be observed at all times. If a company is observed backing an apparatus without a spotter, discipline will be administered as if the vehicle had a backing accident. (See Section 302.15) (A).

### **302.13 Accidents Involving Fire Department Vehicles**

- A. Notify the Fire Dispatch of the accident and request any assistance needed. The Police Department shall be notified. Give company number, location, and state the type of help needed.
- B. A SO2 supervisor will respond to all Fire Department vehicle accidents to investigate the accident. The Duty Chief will be notified of any Fire

Department vehicle accidents on nights and weekends. The-Duty Chief will confer with the appropriate District Chief to determine if a Duty Chief response is required.

- C. The officer, or a company member designated, shall inform the Fire Dispatch if any members or civilians have been killed or injured. If necessary, render appropriate medical care.
- D. When responding on an emergency and a minor accident has occurred, the officer shall notify the Fire Dispatch Operator of the accident and request that the police respond. When it is absolutely necessary, a member shall be left at the scene to fill out the Accident Report Form. Normally the company will go out of service until police investigation is complete.
- E. When traffic is blocked due to an accident, the officer shall cooperate with the police, as far as possible, in clearing the street, avoiding further damage to apparatus and equipment.
- F. All officers shall notify the Fire Dispatch immediately of any condition that would put the apparatus out of service.
- G. After returning to quarters from a minor accident scene where the SO2 supervisor was unable to respond, the officer shall give the SO2 supervisor a telephone report, followed by the required written reports.
- H. If the apparatus is inoperable, the officer shall arrange for a reserve apparatus through the District Chief.
- I. The vehicle must be taken to Fleet Services for an estimate of damage within 24 hours of the accident or Fleet Service's next business day.
- J. If the incident results in a fatality or a serious injury requiring hospitalization, the City Department of Risk Management must be notified.
- K. The Supervisor's Investigation of Vehicle Accident F-90s will be completed by the SO2 supervisor investigating the accident.
- L. The Drivers Report of Vehicle Accident F-92s shall be completed by the person driving or operating the vehicle at the time of the accident.
- M. State of Ohio BMV 3303 Accident Form must be filled out for **all** accidents involving CFD vehicles regardless of damage, loss or injuries.
- N. For further information about forms and contacts following a vehicle accident, refer to your supervisor and City of Cincinnati Administrative Regulation #46.

### **302.15 Corrective Action for Preventable Accidents**

- A. Preventable accidents may result in a disciplinary hearing. All accidents will be reviewed on a case by case basis. However, a direct violation of established written procedures shall result in a minimum of a written



reprimand for the first at fault offense, unless mitigated by extenuating circumstances.

The action or inaction of the officer and/or firefighters assigned to the apparatus will be reviewed to determine his/her role in the accident.

A review of each accident will be performed to determine any possible actions that may be necessary to reduce cost and improve accountability.

- B. In the event that the Fire Chief determines that a member was at fault during any operation of a city vehicle that results in serious bodily injury, the member shall have a disciplinary hearing. **“Serious Bodily Injury”** means bodily injury that creates a serious disfigurement, serious impairment of body function or results in a protracted loss of work time.

### **302.17 Suspended Driver License**

A. Possession of a valid Ohio Driver License and possession of car insurance as required by the State of Ohio is a condition of employment for all Cincinnati Fire Department employees. Failure to maintain a valid Ohio Driver License will result in discipline up to and including dismissal from city employment.

1. Be advised that failure to pay traffic violations received in other states will cause your Ohio Driver License to be suspended. This is true because of cooperative reporting of traffic violations between the states. It is also possible that you may not be aware of the suspension unless you are stopped by police for another traffic violation or you applied for license renewal.
2. Failure to maintain insurance for your vehicle will also result in a license suspension. Proof of insurance is checked by the State of Ohio on a random basis as well as at the time of license renewal.

B. Fire Department employees will not be permitted to operate any city owned vehicle, nor be allowed to operate a private vehicle in the performance of their Fire Department duties, without the possession of an unrestricted State of Ohio Driver License.

1. Any restrictions or violations that could lead to a driver license restriction must be reported to the Fire Department via the employee's chain of command.
2. Failure to report restrictions will subject the individual to the disciplinary process.
3. Members must notify the Fire Department of any driving restrictions within 24 hours after the restriction is imposed.
4. Promoted FAOs with restricted or suspended license will be subject to company details consistent with normal company operations.

**302.19 Utility Drivers**

- A. The Training section will conduct written and practical examinations of members to qualify them as a second person on a pumper, aerial apparatus, ARFF 18 or heavy rescue apparatus.
- C. Members who pass a Civil Service Examination for Fire Apparatus Operators are qualified to drive and operate all fire apparatus.
- D. Members who qualify as a Fire Apparatus Operator must familiarize themselves with all apparatus of every type:-

**302.21 Ladder Company Operations**

- A. Members must be aware of their surroundings at all times, especially when using the aerial ladder. Attention must be given to electrical lines, other possible conductors that may be energized, and the possibility of building or roof collapse. Members are cautioned that the only time an aerial ladder is to be used near power lines is when there are lives threatened. A safe clearance must be maintained. Each situation must be evaluated with safety being the number one priority. The Aerial should be immediately retracted after the objectives of its use have been met.
- B. Aerial ladders can be damaged very easily. Because of this, strict adherence to several guidelines is to be followed. Extension and elevation limits must be followed and the aerial ladder must not be used for mechanical ventilation, tearing off gutters, punching holes, etc. Equipment operators must be alert at all times and make sure that aerial ladders are not subjected to high temperatures or overloading.
- C. It is the policy of the Fire Department to discourage any FAO or member from overriding the outrigger leveling system in order to operate an aerial ladder.
- D. Torquing or twisting appears to be prevalent in aluminum ladders. Therefore, whenever aerial ladders are placed against a building, care should be taken to support both beams of the ladder and a limited number of fire personnel should be on the ladder at any one time. Ladder pipe operations should be done within the parameters of extension and elevation with care taken to keep the hose line in the center of the ladder. Rotation of the ladder should be done slowly to reduce the whipping effect of the outer fly sections.
- E. Whenever there are dents or tears in the ladder framework, loose cables, excessive noise in operation, or anytime the operator feels that a potential problem exists, the ladder shall be reported immediately to your immediate Supervisor and Fleet Services.