TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Driving: Safe Backing Takes Practice

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

FOCUS: Fire apparatus accidents involving backing incidents occur too frequently and result in costly damage to property.

CHALLENGE

Each day thousands of emergency apparatus is involved in backing activities. Not surprisingly, there is a high frequency of near misses as well as serious accidents that occur as the result of this activity. These backing accidents result in damages to our vehicles, buildings, equipment and potentially to other firefighters.

Firefighters who drive the apparatus are professional drivers who have the responsibility for very expensive equipment. Great care must be taken to reduce the potential for damage to the apparatus. Aside from the cost, sidelined apparatus is not available to provide the necessary services to the community.

The profession has determined that the "best practice" when backing is to use a "spotter". Most departments have established this practice as a policy. Yet backing accidents continue to happen. Investigations of the incidents and near misses indicate time is a contributing cause. Firefighters didn't seem to believe there was the time to locate a spotter if one was not readily available.

Training programs should enforce the need for using spotters. In addition, the training should ensure that there is coordinated communications between the driver and spotter as well as consideration for use of radio communications.

Due to the size and value of our emergency equipment, we must put additional emphasis on our backing procedures.

DISCUSSION

- Have you witnessed a near miss involving backing activity ?
- Have you been involved in a backing accident while in the department?
- 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 improve our safe backing procedures?

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

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