**MIIA**

**MOTOR VEHICLE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BACKING POLICY**

Purpose: Adopt a proactive management system for backing procedure policy

It is recommended that all municipalities implement a “backup” policy while operating a city or town owned vehicle. Provide a copy to all employees and maintain a signature on file 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, the officers eyes are focused on what's in front of them rather than what’s behind them.

In a personal experience while working as a police officer in the City of Warwick, RI an officer was walking in the parking lot of police headquarters heading into work. An officer that left a few minutes earlier from his tour of duty backed his personal vehicle up and struck the officer breaking his leg.

A general order was issued the next day that all personnel vehicles parked on City property will be required to back their vehicles into a parking spot. The G.O. was to assure that someone exiting from a parking spot would have a much clearer view than trying to back up. With the current vehicles being manufactured with backup cameras and sonar, that has reduced the risk of what had occurred. In an emergency situation with adrenaline rush we want to establish that policy for all police vehicles to be backed into a parking space to reduce the risk of a collision.

**Fire**:

If there are two people in the cab of a fire truck or ambulance, then the passenger should exit out of the vehicle and assist the driver in backing. Spotters are a proven method of avoiding collisions, spotters can be at risk for injury or death. 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 1 person within the cab then use all the tools available to backup safely. Backup cameras, those vehicles not equipped with a backup camera can purchase aftermarket cameras. If a spotter can’t be obtained then get out of the vehicle and walk around it, completing a 360 degree circle of the vehicle surveying the backing area. Make sure overhead clearance is okay, check for overhead obstructions.

Make sure the windows for the drivers side and passenger side are open to allow for maximum communication and visibility.

Painted lines at the station inside and outside is a good recommendation for the driver 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 manpower for a spotter to be there, then the driver should exit the vehicle before backing. The driver should conduct a 360 degree inspection around the vehicle to assure the safety of backing. If pulling into a garage the driver should use the mirrors and assure proper distances on both sides of the vehicle. If painted lines need to be added into the garage bay as a guide, then it’s recommended.. If the department has the resources of a large department and manpower is always available then a spotter should be utilized. If aftermarket cameras are available, that should be an option to look at.

**Proximity Detection Systems:**

Radar and ultrasonic technology are both being used for backing. This alerts the driver with a visual or audible warning, as you approach closer to an object the tone will generate a more rapid beep as you get closer to a steady tone when a collision will occur.

If you are unsure of your backing due to poor lighting conditions, poor 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. 1/3 of all backing collisions are for Police and Fire Departments. Studies have shown for decades for this to be fact and from a risk management perspective it is recommended that a policy be adopted and enforced.

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