



Safety Bulletin

Apparatus/Equipment Safety when Responding

Date: September 25, 2023

Number: 23.008

Effective Date: September 25, 2023

Expiration Date: N/A

Approved By: Kalvyn W. Smith, Fire Rescue Chief



Maintaining Situational Awareness and Ensuring Safe Apparatus Response

The Occupational Health & Safety Committee is committed to fostering the safest possible workplace conditions for all personnel. To that end, this safety bulletin serves as a crucial reminder to all committee members and staff regarding the importance of situational awareness during emergency responses.

1. General Awareness

Situational awareness is not solely a post-incident consideration but should be ingrained from the moment the call is received. It begins before the actual response. All members are expected to be vigilant and continuously aware of their surroundings when mounting any apparatus, regardless of its type.

2. Technicians

Technicians play a pivotal role in maintaining safety during response. It is imperative that they remain cognizant of potential hazards, such as open compartment doors, loose equipment, and objects obstructing the path of travel for the apparatus. Examples of such hazards include:

- Radio straps hanging from mirrors
- Shorelines with excess slack that may snag on the apparatus
- Gear or equipment hanging on vehicle doors or handles
- Members' gear bags, boots, helmets, or SCBA masks

3. Driver Responsibilities

Drivers bear a significant responsibility in ensuring a safe response. They must perform a thorough walk-around inspection of the apparatus, verifying that all compartment doors are securely closed and that there are no obstacles obstructing the path of travel, including objects on the front apron. Please note that overhead doors must be opened to facilitate this inspection of the front apron. Follow these steps:

- Open the overhead door and commence the walk-around inspection while crew members don their personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Conclude the walk-around by conducting a detailed inspection of the front apron, ensuring the door is fully open, granting a clear exit path.
- Drivers should consider doors on automatic timers but should allocate ample time for a safe exit from the bay.

4. Officer Responsibilities

Officers hold a vital role in maintaining awareness and ensuring a positive safety culture within their teams. They are responsible for:

- a. Initiating discussions about situational awareness and safety with all crew members.
- b. Displaying a positive attitude towards safety and encouraging safe practices.

5. Prohibited Actions

Under no circumstances should any members place objects in the path of travel of Fire or EMS apparatus without the knowledge and approval of the driver and officer. This prohibition extends to actions during shift changes and the placement of gear in front of bay doors. Please relocate gear to an area that does not obstruct the path of travel. Additionally, it is imperative not to transport gear bags through living quarters. Officers at their respective stations should proactively find suitable solutions for oncoming crew members.

Conclusion

Situational awareness is an essential element of our commitment to workplace safety. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this safety bulletin, we collectively contribute to a safer working environment and more effective emergency responses.

Your dedication to safety is appreciated. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact Captain Matthew Shields.

