



Safe Backing of Apparatus

Discussion Questions



1. What is the SOG for backing up apparatus?
2. Where are back-up spotters to be positioned?
3. What additional safety procedures are taken by the operator prior to backing up any apparatus?

The Officer's & Driver's Responsibilities

- The Officer is responsible for the operation of the vehicle and it's personnel.
- The Officer is responsible for following and enforcing policies and procedures. In this case– deploying spotters when backing up or as necessary to allow the safe movement of the vehicle.
- The driver is in control of the vehicle and therefore responsible for its movement. He/she should not move the vehicle until directed by the Officer and when spotters have been deployed in a backing up situation.
- If the driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she shall stop the vehicle until they are back in his/her sight.
- If more than one spotter is being used, the driver will need to maintain contact with both of them. This means shifting his/her attention from one spotter to another frequently so as to safely move the vehicle. This should indicate that the vehicle should be moving at a slower than normal rate to safely watch both spotters.
- If at any time the driver feels that the situation is not safe, he/she should stop the vehicle until the situation is corrected. This may mean getting out and physically walking around the vehicle and down the road to where the vehicle is headed.

The Spotter's Responsibilities

- The spotter is there to direct the driver while backing up the vehicle.
- The spotter needs to be constantly aware of the surroundings while performing this function.
- The spotter needs to be constantly looking and listening for other vehicles and people that may enter the path of the vehicle that is backing up.
- The spotter must either stop the oncoming hazard or stop the vehicle being backed up.
- The spotter must be aware of objects and direct the driver safely around them.
- The spotter must not only look at ground level for obstructions, but also LOOK UP for overhead hazards – tree branches, wires, signs, canopies, ladders...
- The spotter shall maintain visual contact with the driver at all times.
- The spotter needs to be in the line of sight of the mirrors of the vehicle being backed up at all times.
- At night, the spotter should position one of the rear spotlights on themselves or use a flashlight to help the driver see them. DO NOT point the flashlight directly in the mirror of the driver, as it will blind him/her.
- The spotter shall use hand signals to direct the driver. These hand signals should be somewhat exaggerated so that the driver can be clear as to what the spotter is signaling in the mirror.
- Voice communication between the spotter and driver is also good, but the driver may not hear the spotter over the noise of the vehicle and other background noise.
- The use of portable radios to communicate between the spotter and driver may prove beneficial in certain circumstances.
- In congested or tight areas, more than one spotter may be necessary.
- In congested or tight areas, one spotter may be needed at the rear and one at the front of the vehicle being moved either forward or backward. We have experienced several incidents where the spotters were at the rear of the vehicle and the front of the vehicle struck an object.
- Spotters should also be used when going forward in tight areas, to avoid hitting and objects. Like during the winter when snow banks tend to push parked cars further into the already narrow streets.