



**FALMOUTH VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION**  
**FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
***SAFETY BULLETIN***

**SUBJECT: VOSH BACKING REGULATION**

**NUMBER:**  
SB09-005

**APPROVED:**

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**INITIATED**  
08/13/2009

**PREPARED:**

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**REVISED**

The Virginia Department of Labor & Industry's Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Program and the Virginia Safety & Health Codes Board have adopted a final regulation for:

**Reverse Signal Operation (Backing) of Construction  
& General Industry Equipment (Fire Apparatus is included)**

**This regulation is to take effect on September 18, 2009**

Since 1992, Virginia has averaged two fatal accidents per year involving the backing of construction and general industry vehicles.

Unless otherwise noted, all construction and general industry vehicles with an "obstructed view to the rear" are covered by this regulation.

**Summary of the Regulation**

The new regulation will provide that vehicles, machinery and equipment with an "obstructed view to the rear" ***shall not*** be operated in reverse unless:

1. The vehicle has a reverse signal alarm audible above the surrounding noise level **and**
    - 2a. either the vehicle is backed up only when a designated observer (Backer) signals that it is safe to do so, **or**
    - 2b. before operating the vehicle in reverse, the driver visually determined that no one is in the path of the vehicle.
- **"Obstructed view to the rear"** is anything that interferes with the view of the driver to the rear of the vehicle. This includes damage to windows or side mirrors; restricted visibility due to weather conditions (e.g., heavy fog, heavy snow); or work being done after dark without proper lighting.

Work procedures and training requirements for designated Backers and Drivers/Operators of covered equipment.

**Backers Shall Not:**

- Do any activities other than those related to the vehicle being signaled;
- Use personal cell phones/head phones, etc., that could pose a distraction;
- Go behind in close proximity to a vehicle while it is backing up.

**Backers Shall:**

- Be trained in the requirements of the regulation;
- **Always stay in the line of sight of the vehicle driver while it is backing up;**
- Stay a safe working distance from the vehicle;
- Be provided with and wear during daylight hours a *safety vest/jacket* in orange, yellow, strong yellow green or fluorescent versions of these colors;
- Be provided with and wear at nighttime a *safety vest/jacket* with reflective material in orange, yellow, white, silver, strong yellow green or a fluorescent version of these colors (visible at a minimum distance of 1,000 feet).

**Drivers/Operators Shall:**

- Be trained in the requirements of the regulation; and
- **Not** operate a vehicle in reverse unless they keep constant line of sight of the backer.  
**If visual contact with the Backer is lost;**
  - **The driver shall immediately stop the vehicle** until sight of the Backer is regained and a signal is received from the Backer to restart the backing operation.

**All Members Shall Not:**

- Cross the path in close proximity to a vehicle while it is backing up.

The Falmouth VFD's Backing SOP is currently being updated to be in compliance with this new State Regulation.

Violation of this regulation can result in a fine being issued to the Department, the Operator and the Backer by the Department of Labor. The State is allowing a one month grace period from 9/18/2009 to 10/18/2009. During this period fines will not be issued only warnings will be issued.