



Columbia Fire Department

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Retain Memo: 09-004R

To: All Career and Volunteer personnel

From: Harry Tinsley, Assistant Chief of Operations

Date: 12/22/09

Re: Bay door operations policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the closing of Fire Station bay doors for fire apparatus. During the 2008/2009 fiscal year we had several incidents involving fire trucks striking bay doors while exiting the station for a total of \$9,000 in loss. This of course equates to a \$750 per month expenditure, which under the current budget restraints of the current departmental budget, cannot be afforded. Not to mention the disciplinary action that takes place following these incidents if anyone were to be suspended; in turn forcing staffing to hire overtime to fill the void causing further use of money budgeted to other areas.

The easy solution would be to simply take the remote control hardware off the station bay doors and go back to the old system where a Firefighter has to open and shut the bay doors manually. We feel that this can be avoided by asking all personnel to follow the simple procedures stated in this policy.

***Note:** These steps have been tested at several different stations to see if the added time would affect response. At most stations tested it took a total of 1 minute-6 seconds to complete the steps and be out the door with all personnel starting from the day room or an office. This was only a few seconds difference from the operation prior to this policy.*

With practice, these new steps will become routine and hopefully we can avoid future losses. The Officer in charge of a fire company is responsible for the safe operation of his/her fire unit(s). Failure to practice and enforce these new steps will result in disciplinary action.

Policy:

I. Leaving the bay (2, 3, & 4 person trucks)

- A. When responding to a call or leaving the station under non-emergency conditions, the bay door must be opened using the wall-mounted control (this will ensure that the door is completely in the open position prior to the truck starting).
- B. A Firefighter must step outside the bay door and ensure the bay door is up completely and has stopped at its highest point. He must also ensure that there are no obstructions under, over, and on both sides of the truck. *(Note: The driver is still responsible for confirming this before operating the vehicle. Step B is intended to be an extra step for safety. The Officer will still be responsible for the over all safe operation of the vehicle)*
- C. Once the Firefighter confirms all is safe for the truck to leave the bay, he/she will motion for the driver to pull forward to exit the bay.
- D. After the truck pulls through the bay door, the Firefighter quickly confirms that the rear of the truck is clear for the bay door to be shut.
- E. The Firefighter will then close the bay door using the wall-mounted control or board the truck and close the bay door using the remote control. *(The door remote can be located with Firefighters or the Officers).*

II. Leaving the bay (1 person trucks)

- A. When responding to a call or leaving the station under non-emergency condition, the bay door must be opened using wall control.
- B. Before moving the vehicle through the bay door, the driver *must* ensure that the bay door is fully opened and has stopped at its highest point.
- C. Once the driver has confirmed the door is fully opened and has stopped at its highest point, he/she must pull completely out of the bay ensuring that the rear of the truck is at least 10 feet from the bay door. *(Note: If the driver cannot judge from the driving position that he/she is clear of the bay door. The driver must set the parking brake, exit the vehicle, and confirm that the truck is clear from the door by walking to the rear of the vehicle)*
- D. Once confirmation is complete, the driver may close the bay door using the remote control or the wall mounted control.

III. Re-entering the Station (Backing & pulling through)

- A. The bay door may be opened using either the remote control or the wall control.
- B. The Firefighters on multi-personnel units backing the apparatus must confirm that the bay door is fully open and has stopped at its highest point before directing the driver to back through the bay door.
- C. On a single person unit, the Driver must confirm the bay door is fully opened at the highest point before backing through the bay door. If this cannot be done from the driving position, the driver must set the park brake, leave the driver's seat, and walk to the rear of the vehicle and confirm the door is fully opened before backing.

- D. For the vehicles that pull through the station from the rear, before opening the bay door, the Driver or Officer must confirm the bay door is clear of obstructions before opening the door. *(This means that the truck should be in close proximity of the bay door before opening. Fire personnel should not open the door from the road or when driving up the driveway.)*

IV. Stations with automatically closing doors

- A. These stations must follow the policy as written with the exception of having to close the bay door using the remote control or wall-mounted control.
- B. When the truck is leaving the station or backing in, a Firefighter must remain at the bay door control until the truck is through the door to ensure that the door doesn't come down prematurely on the truck.

V. Compliance and discipline

- A. Compliance with this policy will require a change in mindset for each member of this department. As with any new policy, it will take time to get used to the change. Officers are expected to enforce this policy at the company level. Chief Officers are to ensure their Officers are complying with the policy.
- B. Responsibility for any future incidents involving bay doors and fire apparatus because of non-compliance will fall on the member in charge of the individual fire unit. Other personnel involved may be disciplined if it was determined that they may have contributed to the accident because of non-compliance.
- C. It is understood that there are sometimes forces outside of our control that may contribute to an accident even when all personnel are in compliance with this policy e.g. door spring failure while exiting or entering the station, malfunctioning electronic devices. In these situations, a professional door technician will be called to determine the cause of the failure.
- D. Discipline consistent with the guidelines and policy set forth in SOG ADM-033 will apply for any failure in compliance.
- E. If the vehicle is damaged and the driver is found at fault, the City Employee Handbook's Post Accident Testing Policy will be enforced as well as the Fire Department Post Accident & Damage Policy.

