

Shepherd Tri-Township Fire Department

FIRES - VEHICLE

Procedure:

This procedure shall apply to all automobiles, pick-up trucks and light duty vans that are reported to be on fire. The absence of smoke or flame shall not constitute sufficient evidence that a fire condition does not exist. The incident commander (IC) has full responsibility for assuring compliance with this procedure. Authority to deviate from this procedure rests solely with the incident commander who will bear responsibility for the results of any deviation. The following procedure shall be used:

1. Apparatus approach and positioning. Apparatus and personal vehicles responding to a vehicle fire shall be positioned (as far as conditions permit):
 - uphill from the involved vehicle to prevent burning fuel from running toward the apparatus.
 - upwind from the involved vehicle to minimize smoke exposure to the apparatus and the apparatus operator.
 - at least 100 feet from the involved vehicle to provide a safety zone around the involved vehicle.
 - between working firefighters and approaching traffic to protect personnel from traffic.

2. All arriving personnel will report to a staging area as defined by the incident commander. If command has not been established, responding personnel will stage at the first arriving engine. All operational assignments will be made from the staging area. When an operation is completed, assigned personnel shall report back to staging.

3. A safety perimeter shall be established around the involved vehicle. The area of the safety perimeter shall be all area within a 100 foot radius of the vehicle. All personnel operating within the safety perimeter shall be in full protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus.

4. All personnel shall operate with an awareness of the following potential hazards:
 - shock absorbing bumpers that may explode and separate from the vehicle.
 - multiple or auxiliary fuel tanks.
 - sealed drive shafts that may explode when heated.
 - multiple batteries (especially on diesel vehicles).
 - propane or long fuel tanks (especially on utility company vehicles).

 - high pressure hoses connected to air conditioning equipment that may separate or burst releasing oil and pressurized Freon gas.
 - hood springs that may be weakened by exposure to fire (hood should be propped open with an appropriate tool).

5. The initial fire attack shall be made with a line capable of flowing at least 120-180 gpm [13/4]. If possible, the vehicle should be approached at a 45 degree angle so that firefighters are not in a direct line with the front or rear bumpers. When approaching a well-involved vehicle a wide spray pattern will provide maximum protection for personnel.
6. As soon as possible the wheels of the involved vehicle should be blocked to prevent movement during fire suppression operations.
7. Any fire exposing the fuel tanks should be controlled first. Exposed fuel tanks should be cooled to minimize internal pressure and the possibility of rupture. After all the fire around the fuel tanks has been controlled, move to the passenger and engine compartments.
8. Use extreme caution when opening the passenger and engine compartments. Fire may flash outward when the compartment is ventilated. Always have a charged hose line available before the compartment is opened and all personnel should stand to the side when the compartment is opened.
9. The electrical system should be secured as soon as possible by disconnecting or cutting the battery cables. Always disconnect the negative or ground cable first.

Procedure Overview/Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to assure the efficient extinguishment of fires involving automobiles and other light duty vehicles while maintaining the highest level of safety for all responding personnel.