

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Firefighting
SUBJECT: Vehicle Fires
REVISED: 7/2013**

PURPOSE:

- A. To provide a means of extinguishing fires in vehicles.
- B. To protect suppression personnel when fighting vehicle fires.

POLICY:

These guidelines shall be followed whenever a fire occurs in a vehicle.

RESPONSE:

The response for vehicle fires should be:

- 1. Pumper/rescue
- 2. Tanker
- 3. Rescue
- 4. Pumper
- 5. Fire police vehicle

PROCEDURES:

- A. Park apparatus uphill, and up wind.
- B. Continue size-up during the incident.
- C. Determine if additional assistance is needed.
- D. Use fire department fire police for traffic control.
- E. If involved vehicle is a common carrier, determine type of cargo.
- F. Utilize the crash recovery computer program to determine if there are any air bags, or electrical hazards.

SAFETY:

- A. Wear protective clothing and SCBA's.
- B. Consider traffic conditions and be conscious of traffic hazards to personnel.
- C. Consider the flow of spilled fuel, burning or non burning.
- D. Use adequate size hand lines, and appropriate foam systems.
- E. Be alert for possible explosion of fuel, or electrical system.
- F. Be on guard for explosion of pressurized "energy absorbing" bumpers and shock absorbers.
- G. Be mindful that batteries may serve as an ignition source, produce electrical shock or explode.
- H. Remember that the suspension systems on many buses may collapse to within four inches of ground level when exposed to fire.
- I. Remember most motor homes, campers, and mobile canteens have built in LPG tanks onboard.

- J. Vehicles that have air bags, and their air bag has not deployed should be approached with caution. Personnel should not position themselves between the bag and seat while the air bag is armed.
- K. Vehicles with armed, un deployed air bags should not have any tools or other objects placed in their vicinity due to those objects becoming flying objects.
- L. Be alert for new hybrid vehicles with large battery packs usually located in the trunk. These batteries usually are high voltage.
- M. Be alert for new fob type vehicles that don't take a key to start them.

OPERATIONS:

- A. Consider life safety.
- B. Consider water supply availability.
- C. Consider slope of terrain.
- D. Determine type of fuel which may be involved.
- E. Consider fuel system – newer vehicles have pressurized fuel systems.
- F. Breathing apparatus shall be necessary for operations on all vehicle fires, inside and outside the vehicle.
- G. Be prepared for tire fires to re-ignite.

POST-EMERGENCY:

- A. Have investigators determine the cause of the fire, as long as a vehicle accident was not involved.
- B. Insure that vehicle is in a fire safe condition prior to towing service removal of same.