

<b>VEHICLE FIRES</b>		<b>TROY FIRE DEPT. TACTICAL PLAN 208.01</b>	
<i>Issued</i>	<i>07/94</i>	<i>Reissued</i>	<i>01/07</i>
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This plan will outline the basic operational procedures to be followed when the Fire Department operates at vehicle fires. This plan may be modified to fit extenuating circumstances by the Incident Commander.

### **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

When dispatched to a reported vehicle fire, personnel must plan their response based on the following factors:

- TYPE OF VEHICLE BURNING Each type of vehicle, car, truck, semi, etc. presents different hazards, such as fuel type, passengers, and cargo.
- VEHICLE LOCATION The location of the vehicle dictates the type of traffic hazard firefighters will encounter. Firefighters and the apparatus operator **MUST** be protected from oncoming traffic. The second pumper should stage a short distance from the incident, blocking the traffic lanes as necessary to protect personnel.

### **ARRIVAL AT THE INCIDENT**

Upon arrival, consider where to place the apparatus. Apparatus should be uphill and upwind. Park at an angle if traffic is present in order to protect the pump operator. Do not park closer than 50' from the burning vehicle whenever possible. (With a 100' pre-connect, this will allow 50' of hose to work with.)

If a driver can be located, immediately determine if any occupants or dangerous cargo is in the vehicle. In the case of a truck, or semi tractor/trailer, locate any shipping papers or placards. These actions should be done before any extinguishing attempts are made on the vehicle.

### **ESTABLISHING COMMAND**

The Incident Commander (IC) shall perform a preliminary size-up of the situation upon arrival. This size-up should include vehicle location, cargo, and the possibility of victims. If traffic conditions exist, the Police must be called as soon as possible for traffic control.

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## ASSIGNMENTS

In order to coordinate the various aspects of the incident, the IC shall assign crews as required:

- **Attack Crew** The needed amount of personnel to attack the vehicle fire. This may require more than one attack line.
- **Support Crew** These personnel are used to provide support activities such as: gaining access to the vehicle, lighting, and other tasks as assigned.
- **Safety Officer** This person will serve as the overall observer to insure safety to the operation. The IC will automatically assume this position if no person is designated.
- **Staging** This can be either assigned to an individual, or given to the pump operator. Unused personnel must be kept at staging, away from the incident. This also gives a single point where the IC can obtain more personnel.

## OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Operations at vehicle fires have common objectives. These objectives can be summarized as follows:

- **Cargo** The number one objective at any vehicle fire is to determine if any hazardous cargo is present. This is especially critical with fires in the cargo area of trucks and passenger cars. It must be assumed that the vehicle is carrying hazardous items in its trunk or cargo area.
- **Extinguishment** Fire control is the second objective. A minimum of one 1 ¾" attack line must be used. Firefighters must be in full protective gear with SCBA. In other than minor fires, a second backup line should be in place.
- **Spilled Fuel** The IC should watch for the signs of any fuel leakage. The fuel lines are routed in many different places. Most vehicles have electric fuel pumps. It is important to disconnect the battery as soon as possible. The IC must also be aware that many vehicles have **PLASTIC GAS TANKS** that will rupture with very little heat or flame impingement, spilling fuel into the fire.

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- **Ventilation** Consideration should be given to using the Positive Pressure Fan to blow smoke away from the vehicle. This will allow fire crews to gain access quicker, and improve visibility. The fan can also be used to blow smoke away from the roadway, eliminating blind spots for motorists.
- **Water Supply** In most cases the 1000 gallons of water on the first engine is adequate for extinguishment of vehicle fires. If the fire is in a larger vehicle that may require additional water, and the incident is on I-75, consider calling a 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm for additional water and potential relay pumping operations.

## EXTINGUISHMENT

Fires in motor vehicles normally occur in one of three areas: The engine compartment, passenger compartment, or the cargo compartment, or load carrying areas.

- **Engine Compartment** Access to the engine compartment is normally gained by opening the hood. If the control cable is unusable, the hood must be pried open. This should be accomplished by using the porta-power with the spreader. Use a halligan tool to expose an area of the hood latch. Once open, use the halligan, or a pike pole, to hold the hood open. Do not rely on hood springs.
  - Use caution when operating at the front or rear of a vehicle if fire is impinging on the bumper assembly. On older vehicles, the bumper shocks could rocket the bumper. On newer vehicles, various gas struts can rocket as well.
  - Combustible metals are often used in the engine compartment. If these are encountered, large quantities of water from a distance should be used.
- **Passenger Compartment** Fire in the passenger compartment is normally easy to gain access to. All windows except the front window are tempered glass. A spring-loaded center punch, or the point of an axe used at the corner of the window, will shatter the glass easily.
  - Large amounts of various plastics are used in automobile interiors, so expect high heat releases, and black smoke. SCBA is mandatory.
- **Cargo/Trunk Area** If the trunk is secured, try to get the keys from the owner. If not available, access can be accomplished by using the procedures outlined for the hood. As stated before, know what is in the cargo area before attempting fire extinguishment. Expect the worse.

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### **OVERHAUL/INVESTIGATION**

After knockdown, investigation of the fire, and overhaul must be completed. If the fire cause is not apparent, and the fire appears suspicious, contact the Duty Officer. Make every attempt to preserve evidence of the fire cause.

Overhaul is similar to the process used in structure fires. Open up areas where smoldering can occur, such as the air cleaner in the engine compartment, or the seats in the passenger compartment.

### **INCIDENT TERMINATION**

Once all equipment and personnel are accounted for, and all hazards have been mitigated, the incident can be terminated and units can pick up. Leave the vehicle with the police department for towing/impound arrangements.