

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

February 18, 2003

TO: All Uniformed Members
Bureau of Emergency Services

FROM: Dean E. Cathey, Assistant Chief
Bureau of Emergency Services

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE POLICY – FUEL AND WATER TENDERS**

Recent statistics compiled by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) documented that 28% of all firefighter fatalities occurred while fire apparatus were responding or returning from emergency incidents. A disproportionate number of these accident fatalities involved tanker-type fire apparatus. Nationwide, water tender vehicles comprise only 3% of apparatus employed by the fire service; however, 16% of the total fatalities involving fire apparatus responding to emergency incidents were of the water tender vehicle class.

Many vehicular accidents resulting from emergency responses are preventable. In fact, investigations conducted by the NFPA credited excessive apparatus speed for existing conditions, and driver error as the two most predominant factors that contribute to fatality accidents.


Water and fuel tender apparatus provide essential logistical functions during emergency incidents; however, the advantages these tenders offer are not significantly improved via an emergency response to an emergency incident. Therefore, in an effort to reduce the potential for preventable accidents, increase safety to our members, and provide optimal service to the citizens we serve, the following response criteria shall apply to all Los Angeles Fire Department fuel and water tenders:

- Responses to emergency incidents shall be on a non-emergency basis.
- Warning lights shall only be used to increase safety, identify the vehicle working at an incident, or cross police lines.
- Sirens shall not be used during responses.



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- Apparatus shall be operated exclusively by members who possess a valid Class "A" or commercial Class "B" driver's license.
- Trained and certified members shall operate these vehicles exclusively.
- Extreme caution shall be used during off-road operations. Many water tender accidents occur off-highway, as these vehicles maintain a high center of gravity that increases the potential for rollover accidents.



DEAN E. CATHEY, Assistant Chief
Bureau of Emergency Services