

# *The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin*



March 2008

**Welcome to The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin!**

The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin is published for members of the Comp Alliance with fire and EMS departments. The intent of this bulletin is to help our members identify and control the leading job related hazards arising from fire-fighting, rescue and emergency service operations and related activities.

This issue addresses methods to reduce the risk of injury arising from apparatus boarding.

*The Firefighter's Safety Bulletin is written by Al Turi, Chief of Safety, (Ret.), FDNY. We thank Chief Turi for his valuable contribution to our safety efforts!*

## **BOARDING APPARATUS**

**Safety begins with a state of mind and firefighters already possess the most effective tool to accomplish a task safely – the brain. When firefighters plan their moves in advance, they are less likely to injure themselves or another person.**



## **THINK SAFETY!**

**Every unit should have some type of response plan for boarding apparatus. The plan should consist of the following:**

- ✓ A designated place to don personal protective clothing.
- ✓ A designated spot to board apparatus. Your Department may require boarding in quarters, on the apron, or in the street. This procedure should seldom vary. It will become routine, avoiding confusion and become a matter of habit, reducing the chance of injuries.

Mounting and dismounting apparatus is a simple task, yet it has resulted in numerous injuries, from simple strains and sprains to near fatal incidents.

The following points are offered for consideration with the intent of reducing injuries while mounting and dismounting apparatus:

- ✓ First and foremost, handrails and safety belts should be examined frequently for serviceability.
- ✓ Personal protective clothing should be donned prior to boarding apparatus.
- ✓ **Never mount or dismount a moving apparatus.** (This is an extremely unsafe act).



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- ✓ Do not board apparatus carrying heavy tools or equipment. Place them in a secure position prior to response. Utilize 2 people if necessary. The same precautions should be taken when dismounting.
- ✓ Secure a grip on a handrail prior to placing your foot on the apparatus. Maintain a three-point stance at all times when mounting or dismounting. For example, two hands on the handrail and one foot on the apparatus or one hand on the handrail and two feet on the apparatus.
- ✓ **A standard procedure should exist to ensure the driver does not move the vehicle until all firefighters are secure and ready to respond.** (This could be as simple as a visual check, an "all-clear" signal prior to moving the vehicle, or a formal check, similar to a roll call where names are called out.)
- ✓ A seated and belted position should be utilized whenever possible.
- ✓ When dismounting, ensure the vehicle operator is aware of your intentions and the vehicle has come to a complete stop.
- ✓ When dismounting be aware of any hazards on the ground that could cause you to lose your footing. (Potholes, curbs, debris, ice, etc.).



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