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## Report of the Week

Having the courage to say, 'no'  
04/08/2010

**Report Number:** 10-0000567

Report Date: 03/25/2010 14:59

### Synopsis

Driver refuses to drive unsafe vehicle.

### Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Lieutenant

Department shift: Other: 1-5

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 0 - 3

Region: FEMA Region I

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

Event type: On-duty activities: apparatus and station maintenance, meetings, tours, etc.

Event date and time: 02/12/1996 07:15

Hours into the shift: 0 - 4

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again? Uncertain

What were the contributing factors?

- Command
- Individual Action
- Equipment
- Decision Making
- Accountability

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury
- Minor injury
- Lost time injury
- Property damage

### Event Description

I was on the job less than one year. I was told to drive the engine. I did my daily equipment check and found a string from the gas pedal to the steering column. A post it on the windshield said that when gas pedal sticks, to pull the string. The captain was okay with this.

### Lessons Learned

I will not ride in an unsafe vehicle. There are no SOPs for this in my department.

### Discussion Questions

Having the courage to say, 'no'

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Even though this week's narrative is short and to the point, there are several discussion points to focus on. One discussion could revolve around the captain's endorsement of the situation. A second discussion could touch on the station "culture" when it comes to vehicle safety. A third discussion could develop around the driver's responsibility, and finally, what outcome would you expect when a first year firefighter tells a captain "no"? Once you have read the rest of [10-567](#) and the related reports, consider the following:

1. Would the situation described in [10-567](#) be permitted to exist in your department?
2. Who has the final say about whether or not a rig stays in service in your department; the captain, the mechanic, or the chief?
3. What happens to a driver in your department when they refuse to drive a rig they deem unsafe?
4. Are the mechanics in your department EVT certified?
5. List 5 "out of service" criteria you believe should be in place for the apparatus in your department.

### **Related Reports – Vehicle Defects**

[05-380](#)

[06-344](#)

[07-1064](#)

[08-360](#)

[09-670](#)

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.