



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

## FLEET MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

**NUMBER: 25-02**

**June 6, 2025**

### **2016 Spartan Tractor Drawn Aerial (TDA) Ladder Bedding**

**Background:** MCFRS owns three 2016 Spartan TDAs which make up most of the TDA reserve fleet. Numerous complaints about the comfort of the ride, specifically in the tiller bucket, have been made about these TDAs. Over the years, mechanics at the CMF have made numerous attempted changes to the seat in the tiller cab to address these issues. These changes have been largely ineffective.

Aerial operators are trained to bed aerials into the cradle firmly (i.e. to operate the lowering system until the hydraulic system stops), to avoid having the aerial “float” while the vehicle is driving on the roads.

**Current State:** CMF mechanics discovered that the hydraulics of the ladder on these particular TDAs are over compressing the trailer. Recent testing has shown that when the aerial is firmly bedded, there is an audible and visual shifting of the aerial and the trailer which causes the aerial and trailer to become more rigid than designed. This rigidity makes the ride much rougher than when the trailer is not compressed.

**Action Needed:**

1. When lowering the ladder into the cradle for the 2016 Spartan TDAs, lower to the point where the ladder is resting in the cradle but not actively pushing down into the cradle. If an audible “clunk” is heard, that is a signal that operators have lowered the ladder too far and should slightly raise the ladder to the resting state. CMF mechanics will be adding decals to the aerial operator’s pedestal to remind personnel of this additional step.
2. CMF mechanics are working with the vendors to change the programming for the hydraulic system, and it is hoped that the above interim fix will not be necessary after those changes.
3. Continue to report problems with the ride quality to CMF via the apparatus defect reporting system.
4. CMF mechanics will continue other efforts in order to improve the ride of the vehicle.

**End State:** If you have any questions, please contact the Apparatus Chief through your chain of command.