

**How to Integrate Responder Safety Into All Aspects of Your Operations**



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**Dangerous?**

What are some of the dangers EMS providers face on every emergency run?



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**Dangerous?**

- Between 1992 and 1997
  - 114 EMTs & paramedics killed on the job
  - Most LODDs related to ambulance crashes
  - 12.7 fatalities per 100,000 EMS workers
    - Police (14.2)
    - Firefighters (16.5)
    - National average for all workers (5.0)
- Study - "Occupational Fatalities in Emergency Medical Services: A Hidden Crisis"

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## Injuries?

- “At any given time, almost 10% of the EMTs and Paramedics in the U.S. miss work because of injuries &/or illnesses suffered on the job.”
- 8.1 of every 100 EMTs will have an injury or illness in one year causing lost-work days
  - National average is 1.3 per 100 lost-work injuries

Source: Study – (2008) American Journal of Industrial Medicine.

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## How do we protect our personnel?



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## “Operations”

### • Organization

- Personnel
- Facilities
- Equipment



### • Services

- Emergency response
- Routine activity
- Special events



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### Pre-employment Assessment / Screening

- Volunteer & career staff
- Health & physical fitness
- Mental aptitude
- Pre-existing conditions
- Criminal background
- Driving record
- Reading, writing
  - Language skills



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### Orientation and Training

- Thorough orientation
- Policies and procedures
- Personal protective equipment
  - Issue and train
- Compliance training (OSHA, VOSH)
  - Initial and annual (BBP, Respirator, HazCom)
- Job function training (EMT, VRT, EVOC)
  - Continuation of certification
- Safety training (Lifting, Highway Ops, HazMat)
  - Initial and in-service training



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### Employee Supervision

- Know your employees
- Know their job duties
- Know their goals
- Observe and comment
  - Positive Reinforcement!
  - Coach & Train
- Watch out for them!



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### Employee Supervision - Safety

- ✓ Eliminate the operation/procedure
- ✓ Change the operation/policy/procedure
- ✓ Guard the operation/equipment
- ✓ Personal protective equipment
- ✓ Education and training
  - Least positive of the group
  - Most effective when used with other strategies
  - "Be More Careful" is not "training"

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### Facilities

- General condition
  - Mold, asbestos, electrical
- Maintenance
- Clean and orderly
- Safety features
  - Sprinklers
  - Fire/smoke, CO detection
  - Extinguishers
  - Security (Locks, alarms, etc.)
  - Exhaust removal
  - Storage space



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### Equipment

- Vehicles
  - Ambulances
  - Officer vehicles
  - Support vehicles
- Patient movement
  - Stretchers
  - Stair chairs
  - Bariatric equipment
- Onboard equipment
  - Jump kits
  - Oxygen, drug boxes
  - Tools, radios



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### Organization Safety

- Personnel
  - Screen, train, supervise
- Facilities
  - Adequate, maintained, safe
- Equipment
  - Vehicles
    - Maintained and safe
  - EMS gear
    - Adequate and in good repair



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### Organization Safety

- Inspections
  - Regular schedule
  - Document
  - Correct deficiencies
- Preventive Maintenance
- ID & Repair defective equipment
- Plan for replacements
- New acquisitions – safety specs!



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### Emergency Response

- Dispatch and emergency response
- On scene operations
- Transport to hospital
- Return to service



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## Emergency Response

- Response policies & procedures
  - Vehicle operations, driver training
- On scene considerations
  - Scene safety, size-up
    - Hazards (Traffic, violence, hazmat, etc.)
    - Personnel accountability
  - Patient handling
    - Infectious diseases, PPE
    - Safe lifting & movement



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## Vehicle Operations

- Response policies and procedures
  - Lights, sirens, traffic light pre-emption
    - Speed, controlled intersections, congestion
  - Driver distractions
    - Communications, computers, cell phones etc.
- Driver training and monitoring
  - EVOG, vehicle specific orientation
  - Electronic monitoring vs. observation

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DriveCam



RescueNet Road Safety



iDrive

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**On Scene Safety Hazards**

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**Scene Hazards?**

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**Scene Hazards?**

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**Patient Movement & Handling**

- How much weight is too much?
- Policies & procedures
  - When to request assistance
  - Special situations
    - Inaccessible / difficult locations
    - Bariatric patients
  - Proper lifting techniques
- Assistive equipment
  - Bariatric units / stretchers
  - Stair chairs, Reeves, Stokes



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**Patient Movement & Handling**

- Infectious diseases
  - PPE – Uniforms, gloves, glasses, masks etc.
  - Decon procedures, facilities & supplies
  - Universal precautions
  - Hepatitis B shots
  - Exposure procedures
    - Report & document!



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## Emergency Response

- Fire Scenes
- Roadway Incidents
- Helicopter LZs
- Hazardous Materials
- Workplace Violence



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While cleaning up & decontaminating after an EMS run a medic has an allergic reaction to latex gloves. The medic experienced hives and difficulty breathing and was transported by ambulance to the hospital.

What else do we need to know about this incident?

As a supervisor what recommendation or corrective action would you make now?

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A Medic was trying to lift a patient onto a stretcher at the scene of a medical call at a private residence. The patient weighed about 250lbs and there were only two people on the ambulance. The Medic strained her back and required medical treatment.

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The rescue squad personnel were at in-service training for vehicle extrication using new tools and equipment that were just delivered. During one of the scenarios, a rescue tech operating the cutter tool slipped and the cutters moved amputating the right index finger tip of a crew member who was holding the vehicle door.

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