

SUBJECT: EMS SAFETY**SECTION:** 306.15**REVISED:** FEBRUARY 11, 2010**PAGE(S):** 2

PURPOSE

To provide safety guidelines for EMS personnel operating on an emergency medical incident.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS

- A. In the cab
 - 1. Always wear seatbelts.
 - 2. Use caution when exiting the EMS unit.
 - 3. Both occupants of the cab should always watch the road.
- B. The patient compartment
 - 1. Never let tunnel vision erase the need to protect yourself. To allow patient care to totally consume your attention is to ignore the first rule of EMS: personal safety.
 - 2. Use seatbelts at all times when patient care allows.
 - 3. Secure the patient. Always fasten the stretcher belts snugly or tighten belts that are undone or loosened en-route.
 - 4. Use child restraint seat when transporting children.
 - 5. Develop the habit of “hanging on.” Certain tasks require personnel to move around the patient compartment.
 - 6. Be careful of hazardous equipment. If possible, stop the squad to start an IV.
- C. Principles of Safe Driving
 - 1. Driving with emergency lights and siren can be dangerous.
 - 2. Use emergency warning lights and sirens appropriately.
 - 3. Provide a smooth ride for passengers in the patient compartment. Be acutely aware of the impact of the ride on those in back of a moving EMS unit.
 - 4. Pay particular attention when crossing intersections.
 - 5. Watch for multiple responses and colliding sirens.
 - 6. Backing up. Always use a spotter in the rear.

LIFTING

- A. Consider proper lifting dynamics
 - 1. Think through the situation.
 - 2. Determine which partner will be lead.
 - 3. Communicate with helpers.

4. Check for adequate footing.
5. Stay in the most balanced position possible.
6. Use the powerful leg muscles, not the back, to accomplish the lift.
7. Keep the weight as close to the body as possible.
8. Know personal limitations.

SCENE OPERATIONS

- A. Arrival – greatest period of vulnerability.
 1. Ask yourself “Should we get out the EMS unit?”
 2. Potentially dangerous situations include: traffic hazards, hazardous materials, crowds, weapons, civil disturbances, etc.
 3. All apparatus shall take a staging position, approximately two (2) blocks short of any scene involving any reported/suspected violence, until the scene is deemed secure by law enforcement.
- B. Dangerous scenes
 1. Suppressing dangerous situations is a law enforcement task.
 2. Most important principle is to get away from the area. Retreat and wait for law enforcement to secure the scene.
- C. Dangerous animals
 1. Try not to let fear show.
 2. Adopt a “take charge” presence.
 3. Use a commanding, loud tone of voice.
 4. Do not turn away from the animal.
 5. If an attack becomes inevitable, try to protect the throat and face.
- D. Other considerations
 1. Never knock while standing in front of the door.
 2. Walk separately. Bunching together creates an easy target. Walk on opposite sides of the hallway or several steps apart.
 3. Glance around corners first.
 4. Concentrate.

HOSTILE SITUATIONS

- A. Determine the threat level by reading body language.
- B. Stay out of reach until achieving an acceptable level of confidence.
- C. Use peripheral vision to gauge how far back to stand to avoid being kicked.
- D. A Law enforcement officer should handle weapons that are found during a patient evaluation.