

SAFETY BULLETIN

Ensure your Team is Prepared!

Transport Injuries

FOCUS: Patient transport is a major source of strains and sprains

CHALLENGE

Strains and sprains represent the largest category of injury to emergency Personnel, approximately 50%. Review of accidents reveal a major source of injuries occur during the transport of patients. During the transport of patients we are faced with an ever growing problem of obesity. The patients are heavier each year and exposing EMS personnel to increasing stresses when lifting. In addition, the residential areas have more unusual physical layouts which make it more difficult to maneuver our equipment. Too often, the patient's condition prohibits the use of equipment that would make transport easier. Using good lifting techniques and body mechanics are essential to help reduce injuries. Improved equipment and proper body mechanics can reduce these types of injuries significantly. However, we must never forget the importance of teamwork. Communication between EMS teammates is very critical. Planning is also very important each time we move patients. The terrain, weather, building layout and physical size and mobility of the patient are issues that must always be addressed during transport. We must always consider getting additional help if necessary before we subject the patient or team members to potential injury!

DISCUSSION

- How do we rate the quality of our existing equipment used to transport our patients?
- When purchasing replacement equipment are we looking for ergonomic improvements?
- What problems have you encountered during the transport of a patient?
- What problems occur due to the differences in height of EMS personnel?
- What can improve teamwork during transport?
- Does our department place enough training emphasis on the "unusual" conditions faced during transport?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

Funding and support for this project has been provided by the State of Washington, Department of Labor & Industries, Safety & Health Investment Projects (SHIP)

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