

Ambulance Operations

Operating privileges

- May exceed posted speed limit as long as not endangering lives
- May drive wrong way on one-way street or down opposite side of road
- May turn in any direction at an intersection
- May park anywhere as long as not endangering lives or property
- May pass in a no passing zone, or proceed cautiously through a red or flashing signal.

Qualifications

- Must have valid drivers license
- May have to attend an approved driving course
- Must use warning devices in manner prescribed by law.
- Must exercise due regard for the safety of others.
- May be additional local/agency qualifications

Basics of good driving

- All team members wear seatbelts
- Steering wheel held with both hands at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock
- Recognize and respond to changes in weather and road conditions
- Speed adjusted for decreased visibility
- Transport route selected for safe travel
- Be familiar with roads, streets, and routes of community
- Maintain safe following distance
- Use headlights to improve vehicle's visibility
- Exercise caution when using red lights and siren

Maintaining control

- Braking
- Railroads
- School Buses
- Bridges and Tunnels
- Day of week
- Time of day
- Road surface

Backing up

- Backing up is source of many ambulance accidents
- Use all resources
- Back slowly and carefully

High Speeds

- Break to Proper speed before entering a curve
- Accelerate carefully and gradually as you leave a curve
- Always use a smooth breaking action

Escorts

- Use only as last resort
- Escort is dangerous to the escort, driver, patient, and others on the road
- Use only if unfamiliar with how to get to the hospital, or if you cannot find the victims location.

Collisions

Main cause of ambulance collisions are intersections

- Motorist approaches just as light is changing, so speeds up
- There are two emergency vehicles and motorists expect only one.
- Vehicles block the ambulance driver's view of pedestrians.

Warning Devices

- Activate emergency lights at all times when responding
- Turn on Headlights even in daytime
- Do not assume that drivers are aware of you
- Never pull directly behind a car and blow siren
- The siren can create emotional and physical stress for the patient
- Know the effects of the siren on your driving.
- Avoid over use of an air horn
- Do not sound when you are close to other vehicles.

Phases of a call

- Daily pre-run preparation
- Dispatch
- En route
- Arrival at scene
- En route to receiving facility
- At the receiving facility
- En route to station
- Post Run

Daily Pre-run Preparation

- Medical Equipment
 - Oxygen equipment, bandages, suction equipment.
 - There maybe an equipment checklist for supplies.
- Non-medical Equipment
- Check ambulance equipment and supplies
 - Oil, fuel, and fluid levels
 - Lights, radio, tires, etc.

Personnel

- Available for response
- At lease one EMT in the patient compartment is minimum staffing for an ambulance – two is preferred.

Dispatch

- Central access
- 24 hour availability
- Trained personnel

Information

- Nature of call
- Name, location, and call-back number
- Location of patient
- Number of patients and severity of the problem
- Other special problems

Dispatch

- Check Vehicle before departure
- Fasten seat belts
- Write down information
- Confirm dispatch information
- Listen for status reports
- Think about what equipment you will want to take into the scene
- Remain relaxed yet focused
- Drive responsibly
- Determine what responsibilities of the team members will be

Arrival at scene

- Notify Dispatch
- Park safely
- Take BSI precautions
- Identify and control hazards
- Notify dispatch immediately if additional resources are needed

On the Scene

- Scene size-up
- Extricate the patient if necessary
- Splint and immobilize extremities before moving patient
- Transfer patient to ambulance using suitable technique

En route to receiving facility

- Check and assure patient well being and comfort
- Check vehicle to ensure it is ready for transport
- Begin ongoing assessment
- Notify dispatch of departure to receiving facility
- Check patient interventions
- Drive prudently
- Keep driver informed of patient condition
- Notify receiving facility

At the receiving facility

- Notify dispatch
- Transfer care of the patient
- Transfer all records and information to emergency department
- Give complete oral report
- Assist emergency department personnel in lifting and moving patient, if requested
- Transfer any valuables or personal effects. etc. medications
- Exchange linens and supplies
- Complete written report

En route to Station

- Clean and inspect ambulance
- Replace supplies
- Wash your hands
- Notify dispatch
- Refuel according to local protocol

Post run

- Fill out and file required reports
- Fill fuel tank if approach half
- Inventory and replenish equipment used
- Wash ambulance exterior if necessary
- Change soiled linens

Infection Control

- Dispose of sharps
- Wash hands
- Clean, disinfect, or sterilize contaminated equipment
- Launder soiled clothing and linens
- Dispose of infectious wastes according to local protocol

Requesting Air Medical Transport

- High-priority patient with prolonged extrication
- Patient cannot be reached by ground vehicles
- Needed medical skills not possessed by ambulance crew.

Medical guidelines

- Shock
- Head injury with altered mental status
- Chest or abdominal injury with signs of respiratory distress
- Serious mechanism of injury
- Penetrating injury to body cavity
- Other time-critical illnesses or injury

Information needed

- Your name
- Department name
- Call-back number
- Nature of incident
- Radio frequency you use
- Exact location of landing zone

Changing Conditions

- Driving at night
- Winter driving
- Fog, Mist, Dust storms, smog