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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAEMT PUBLISHES POSITION STATEMENT ON EMS AMBULANCE SAFETY

Clinton, Miss. – The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) has published a position statement to address serious factors in ambulance safety and their dangers to EMS practitioners – such as a high risk of occupational injury and death for EMS practitioners during patient transportation. In the statement, NAEMT states that it supports the development of a culture of safety in all EMS systems in our nation.

More than 40 years ago, deficiencies at various levels of emergency care – including unsuitable ambulances with inadequate equipment, incomplete supplies, untrained attendees, lack of traffic control and lack of voice communication facilities – were cited by the National Academy of Sciences. While major advancements and improvements have been made in communication systems, clinical equipment and clinical training, the risk of occupational death and injury remains excessively high for EMS practitioners during patient transport.

As EMS involves practitioners providing a variety of treatment modalities during patient transport to a health care facility, it is of the utmost importance that serious factors in ambulance safety be addressed. NAEMT is committed to advocating for the safest practices and regulations that protect and promote EMS patient and practitioner wellness during ambulance transportation.

This would require federal funding for ongoing research and testing of ambulance vehicle design and its key components; development of federal or state reporting systems to identify and track ambulance crash-related injuries and deaths; and the tracking and investigation of crashes by government agencies such as the National Transportation Safety Board and the Department of Transportation.

Additional items of importance to EMS ambulance safety involve EMS systems implementing a safe ambulance operation and risk management program; selecting and using vehicles,

functional occupant restraint systems and personal protective devices that meet or exceed government and industry safety standards; and developing, implementing and enforcing industry-standard safe driving policies and procedures. Employers would be involved in implementing proficiency training, using quality assurance measurements in vehicle driving and operation, monitoring driving behaviors through observation and onboard systems, and maintaining vehicles to meet or exceed manufacturers' and regulatory requirements.

“Because EMS practitioners are not only healthcare providers but also transportation providers, the safety of practitioners depends on the vehicles we use and the conditions surrounding their use. NAEMT feels that ambulance usage needs to be looked at constantly with important safety factors in mind,” says Jennifer Frenette, NAEMT Director, Region I, and an author of the position.

To view the full position statement, please visit the NAEMT Positions page in the Advocacy section of www.naemt.org.

Formed in 1975 and today more than 30,000 members strong, NAEMT is the nation's only association representing the professional interests of all EMS practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians, first responders and other professionals working in pre-hospital emergency medicine. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

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