



NAEMT Position Statement EMS Ambulance Safety

Statement: EMS is a transport based emergency service with practitioners providing a variety of treatment modalities conducted during patient transportation to a healthcare facility. Serious factors exist in ambulance safety, creating a high risk of occupational injury and death for EMS practitioners during patient transportation. NAEMT supports the development of a culture of safety in all EMS systems in our nation. NAEMT is committed to advocating for the safest practices and regulations that protect and promote EMS patient and practitioner wellness during ambulance transportation. This requires the following:

- Federal funding for ongoing research and testing of ambulance vehicle design including the overall structure and interior structures such as grab rails, compartments and equipment restraint systems.
- Federal (or State) development of a reporting system or database to specifically identify and track ambulance crash related injury and death.
- National Traffic Safety Bureau (NTSB) consistently investigates ground ambulance crashes involving all fatalities.
- Department of Transportation (DOT) track ambulance crash data and make safety recommendations.
- EMS systems to implement a safe ambulance operation management program that includes risk management.
- EMS service selection and use of vehicles that meet or exceed government and industry safety standards.
- EMS system requirement of the use of functional occupant restraint systems and personal protective devices that meet or exceed government and industry standards.
- EMS system requirement of the development, implementation and enforcement of safe driving policies and procedures which meet or exceed industry standards.
- Employer required proficiency training, orientation and continuous quality assurance on vehicle driving and operation.

- Employer monitoring of driving behaviors through the use of observation and onboard monitoring systems.
- Employer implementation and documentation of vehicle maintenance programs that meet or exceed manufacturers' and regulatory requirements.

Background: In 1966, 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. Substantial advancements and improvements have been made in communication systems, clinical equipment and clinical training over the past 40 years. However, the risk of occupational death and injury remains excessively high for EMS personnel during transportation.

References:

Position Paper of the Ambulance Transportation Safety (ATS) Task Force (Jan. 2008)

Nadine Levick, MD, MPH: **EMS Vehicle Safety: *Where is the State-of-the-Art?***
Presentation: American Ambulance Association: 2005

Levick, NR: **Emergency Medical Services: Unique Transportation Safety Challenge (2008)** <http://pubsindex.trb.org/paperorderform.pdf>

Slattery MD, D.E., Silver, A, PhD, 'Hazards of Providing Care in Emergency Vehicles: An Opportunity for Reform' Prehospital Emergency Care July/September 2009

Adopted: September 11, 2009