Emergency Vehicle Operations

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Training objectives
EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATIONS COURSE

- We all know that emergency vehicle operators are dedicated professionals who want to know the best way to do their job. That's why you're here for training.
COURSE GOAL:

- provide emergency vehicle operators with the knowledge and skills to operate their vehicles so that their vehicle, equipment, crew, and patients will be delivered safely and efficiently and the safety of the public will be assured during all phases of the delivery of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) involving the emergency vehicle.
In this course you will learn about--

1. legal aspects of emergency vehicle operation, including appropriate vehicle procedures; due regard; true emergencies; negligence; abandonment; good Samaritan provisions; and patient's rights.
2. communications responsibilities for receiving and sending radio messages and for interpreting hand signals

3. emergency vehicle types and operation, including general guidelines about weight restrictions and operation for each type

4. emergency vehicle readiness, including inspection, maintenance, and repair
5. navigation and route planning - selecting the safest route.

6. normal and high-risk driving situations routine traffic to hazardous weather and traffic conditions

7. safety considerations for ensuring safety of passengers, patients and their family, the emergency vehicle, and the crew
Attitude & behaviours
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
Driving Attitudes
9. Drivers condition
Unable to judge properly due to:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Fatigue
- Illness
- Stress
Driving Attitudes
Wellbeing of the EMS responder
DEFINITION OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Defensive Driving is defined as:

a series of interlocking driving techniques aimed at ensuring safe driving, avoiding crashes and at all times in spite of the environment & conditions, conserving lives, limbs, organs, Saving time and money and act reasonably around the conditions and actions of others.
DEFINITION OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING

You control it by deciding when, where and how to drive it

You cannot control, light weather, traffic and other drivers

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

driver

Defensive driving

Environment & conditions

vehicle
## Defensive driving as a series of interlocking driving techniques

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Duties and responsibilities
Duties and responsibilities

• Ensure safe, reliable vehicle operation.

• Reduces the total cost of repairs.

• Minimizes major equipment failure
Duties and responsibilities

• Document any needed maintenance you find
• Make sure needed maintenance has been completed before you place the vehicles in service.
• Perform any maintenance for which your organization makes you responsible.
Duties and responsibilities

• Ensure inspection checklists and work requests are written into a vehicle maintenance log.

• List all maintenance needed and done, including routine maintenance and problems identified by inspections
Cont..

- Support the preventive maintenance program
- Document that the vehicle has been properly maintained
- **NB: REVIEW**- To determine that the vehicle is in safe operating condition and all maintenance required have been performed.
Traffic rules and regulations
emergency vehicle Operation: The Basics

Legal Aspects of emergency vehicle Operation
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE(S):

➢ Identify types of laws that apply to emergency vehicle operation

➢ Identify how specific laws apply to emergency vehicle operation
DEFINING THE LAW

The types of regulations covering emergency vehicle operation and how the regulations guide the decisions you make while performing your job.
Types of Regulations

1. **Constitutional laws** come from the Constitution. The Constitution guarantees the rights of the individual. These laws explain patients' rights before, during, and after transport.

2. **Statutory laws** come from legislative acts.

3. **Ordinances (By Laws)** are guidelines enacted by a governing municipal body or its agent.

4. **Regulations** are guidelines enacted by an agency.
All organizational policy should incorporate the principles of state laws, local ordinances, rules, and regulations into guidelines for the emergency vehicle operator.
Keep the following three principles in mind when approaching the idea of exemptions:

1. Emergency vehicle operators are subject to all traffic regulations unless a specific exemption is made in the state or local statutes.

2. Exemptions are legal only in the emergency mode.

3. Even with an exemption, operators can be found criminally or civilly liable if involved in a crash.
Some examples of exemptions to laws include:

1. proceeding through red lights/stop signs at controlled intersections,
2. parking in a no parking zone,
3. or violating traffic flow and turning procedures.
What is meant by "specific exemption"?
Answer: A specific exemption is a statement which appears in the statutes and specifies an exception to the rule such as: "The operator of an authorized emergency vehicle may park in a no parking zone as long as the operator does not endanger life or property."
Law of Due Regard

All patients and crew members have the right to know that while being entrusted in your care, you are exercising "due regard" for their safety. If ever a crash should occur while you are operating an emergency vehicle, the courts will judge your actions according to this principle.
Ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I responding like others would in the same situation?
2. Am I giving enough notice of my vehicle's approach to allow other motorists and pedestrians to clear a path and protect themselves?
3. Am I using the signaling equipment appropriately? Is it necessary to use it? Can motorists and pedestrians hear and see my signals?
Questions Cont:

4. Am I using extreme caution? I must never travel at a speed that does not permit complete control of my vehicle.
Example 1

No regard for safety - When returning to the station at the end of a run, an emergency vehicle proceeds through a red light after slowing to 10 MPH. This situation indicates the operator had no regard for safety of others. No true emergency exists and the operator is violating a traffic law.
Example 2

Due regard for safety - While enroute to an emergency, the emergency vehicle lights are flashing, the siren is on, and the emergency vehicle is traveling within posted speed limits. The emergency vehicle approaches an intersection with a red light, stops, checks for other motorists, and proceeds through the light. In this case an emergency exists, and the correct procedures were followed to ensure the safety of others.
In some situations, others--not you--will decide whether or not a true emergency exists. However, even in emergency situations, you are still responsible for operating your vehicle in a safe manner.
Situations where others determine the "nature of the emergency" include

1. code system calls
2. information from a dispatcher (example: While enroute to an emergency, the status of the emergency may change--from emergency to no emergency--and this information is relayed to you by the dispatcher.)
3. affiliated emergency service operator requests (example: Another emergency service may ask for your assistance because their service cannot handle the emergency.)

4. medical facility physician's decision
Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is there a high probability of death or serious injury to the patient?
2. Will my actions reduce the seriousness of the incident?
Examples:

➢ True Emergency - A dispatcher reports that an individual, who is highly allergic to bees, is stung by a bee.

➢ Non-Emergency - An individual breaks a leg at the show grounds and the emergency medical crew is transporting the patient to a hospital.
Negligence

You may also be held liable in a court of law if you were in some way careless while performing your duties as an emergency vehicle operator.
Negligence

Any Action which violates the standard of practice or care.
What this means is that as an operator something you **SHOULD HAVE** done was not done or was done incorrectly. As a direct result, a person was injured or killed or property was damaged. No court can replace lives, but they can attempt to compensate the injured or their families with money.
keep the following in mind:

1. Do I have a "duty to act" toward the other person?
2. What must I do to avoid a "breach of duty?" (For example, you must not fail to respond.)
3. How can I avoid the other person suffering injury or loss because of my duty? (The actual cause of the other person's injury or loss must be a direct result of breach of duty, such as a violation of a traffic regulation.)
Case Examples:

Example 1 - An emergency vehicle was transporting a young girl with an injured arm to the hospital when it crashed with another vehicle. The operator of the emergency vehicle was at fault. The crash caused an additional injury to the child. The operator could be found negligent.
Example 2 - An emergency vehicle inspection was done and the operator noted in writing that the tire had a problem. A run was called in and the operator drove the vehicle knowing the tire was bad. During the run, the operator was involved in a crash as a result of the bad tire. The operator could be found negligent.
Abandonment
Once you begin to help someone having a medical emergency or someone who is injured, you have legally initiated a patient/provider contract. This means that you must continue the responsibility for the patient's care until you have transported the patient to another medical provider of equal or higher qualifications.
Good Samaritan Provision

As part of the EMS team, you need to be aware that there are "Good Samaritan" provisions in the law applying to emergency operation and care.
Example

A person stops to help a crash victim who is trapped underneath a vehicle. The person who stops to help would not be liable for any cuts or bruises the victim sustains while removing the victim from the vehicle.
These provisions provide immunity to liability in cases in which you rendered care or were unable to render care. Most of the time the law will grant immunity from liability if the rescuer acts in good faith.
Patient Rights

As part of the EMS team, you need to know the rights of patients during a medical emergency transport. Patients have certain rights before, during, and after transport.
1. Do not speak to the press, your family, friends, or other members of the public about the service provided.

2. Do not relate specifics about what a patient may have said, who the person was or was with, anything unusual about the patient's behavior, or any descriptions of personal appearance.
Other Legal Liability Issues

1. responsibility for passenger possessions
2. failure to report crashes or using improper reporting procedures
3. exceeding load capacity of the vehicle
4. failure to conduct/record vehicle inspections
5. failure to maintain training records
Other Legal Liability Issues Cont.

6. failure to provide training (must not operate any vehicle that operator has not completed operator training)

7. failure to maintain written records of safety meetings
Scenario 1:

You are returning from a run when a car pulls up beside you while you are stopped at a traffic light. The individual informs you that a three-vehicle crash has just occurred on the nearby interstate. No other emergency vehicles are at the scene. The individual informs you that several of the victims are trapped in the cars. The severity of the injuries is unknown. Is this a true emergency situation? Why?
This is a true emergency. Because so little information is known about the injuries or about any other circumstances, the operator must assume a true emergency. In this case, the operator is determining the "nature of the emergency." Always call the dispatcher to tell them about the situation and get instructions.
Scenario 2:

Your emergency vehicle is traveling the wrong way down a one-way street while enroute to a fire at a large apartment complex where people are reported injured. You are using all signaling equipment. Are you observing "due regard"? Why?
YES, because a true emergency does exist. The emergency vehicle operator is complying with the statute (using signaling equipment) while violating the normal direction of movement (wrong way--one way street). Without more information to indicate why traveling the wrong way down this street might be unsafe, it would seem that the operator is exercising due regard.
Scenario 3:

A dispatcher reports that a man phoned requesting help. The man is hysterical and the dispatcher can not determine the extent of the injuries. You respond in an emergency mode. In route, you receive a call from the dispatcher. He reports the man has calmed down and the man thinks his son may have broken his ankle; there is some pain and swelling. Is this a true emergency situation? Why?
Answer:

Most likely NO. Even though the call started as a true emergency, the dispatcher changed the nature of the emergency during the run. Unless local policy dictates otherwise, a broken bone is generally not considered a threat to human life.
Lesson 3: Communication and Reporting
Roles and Responsibilities