Chapter 32
Ambulance Operations

Overview
- Phases of an Ambulance Call
  - Preparation for the Call
  - Dispatch
  - En Route to the Scene
  - Arrival at the Scene
  - Transferring the Patient to the Ambulance
  - En Route to the Receiving Facility
  - At the Receiving Facility
  - En Route to the Station
  - Postrun Phase
- Air Medical Transport
  - Use of Air Medical Transport
  - Landing Zones
  - Safety

Phases of an Ambulance Call
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- Postrun

Preparation for the Call
- Equipment
  - Medical
  - Nonmedical

Preparation for the Call
- Medical equipment
Preparation for the Call

- Medical equipment
  - Basic supplies
  - Patient transfer equipment
  - Aireggs
  - Suction equipment
  - Artificial ventilation devices
  - Oxygen inhalation equipment
  - Cardiac compression equipment
  - Basic wound care supplies
  - Splinting supplies
  - Childbirth supplies
  - Medications
  - Automated external defibrillator

- Nonmedical equipment
  - Personal safety equipment
  - Preplanned routes or comprehensive street maps

- Personnel
  - Available for response
  - At least one EMT-Basic in patient compartment is minimum staffing for an ambulance
Preparation for the Call

- Daily inspections
  - Inspection of vehicle systems

Preparation for the Call

- Daily inspections
  - Equipment
    - Checked and maintained
    - Restocked and repaired
    - Batteries for defibrillator, suction, oxygen, etc.

Preparation for the Call

- Utilization of safety precautions and seat belts
Dispatch

- Central access
- 24-hour availability
- Trained personnel
- Dispatch information
  - Nature of call
  - Name, location, and callback number of caller
  - Location of patient
  - Number of patients and severity
  - Other special problems

En Route to the Scene

- Seat belts
- Notify dispatch
- Essential information
  - Nature of the call
  - Location of the call

En Route to the Scene

- Driving the ambulance
  - Emergency vehicle operations
    - It is recommended, and in some states mandated, that the driver of an emergency vehicle attend an approved driving course
En Route to the Scene

- Characteristics of good ambulance operators
  - Physically fit
  - Mentally fit
  - Able to perform under stress
  - Positive attitude about abilities
  - Tolerant of other drivers

En Route to the Scene

- Safety takes precedence over all other considerations

- Safe driving is an important phase in the emergency medical care of the ill or injured patient

En Route to the Scene

- The driver and all passengers should wear safety belts
- Become familiar with the characteristics of your vehicle
- Be alert to changes in weather and road conditions
- Exercise caution in use of red lights and siren
En Route to the Scene

- Select appropriate route
- Maintain safe following distance
- Drive with due regard for safety of all others
- Know appropriateness of using lights and sirens
- Headlights are the most visible warning device on an emergency vehicle

En Route to the Scene

- Obtain additional information from dispatch
- Assign personnel to specific duties
- Assess specific equipment needs

En Route to the Scene

- Positioning the unit
  - For safety
    - Uphill from leaking hazards
    - 100 feet from wreckage
  - To exit the scene
En Route to the Scene

- Escorts and multiple-vehicle response
  - Extremely dangerous
  - Used only if unfamiliar with location of patient or receiving facility

En Route to the Scene

- Intersection crashes
  - Most common type
  - Motorist arriving at intersection as light changes and does not stop
  - Multiple emergency vehicles following closely and waiting motorist does not expect more than one
  - Vision is obstructed by vehicles

En Route to the Scene

- Common causes of vehicle crashes
  - Excessive speed
  - Reckless driving
  - Failure to obey traffic signals or posted speed limits
  - Disregarding traffic warning signals, inadequate dispatch information
  - Escorts
  - Multiple-vehicle response
  - Failure to anticipate the actions of other drivers
**Arrival at the Scene**
- Notify dispatch
- Size-up
- Body substance isolation
- Scene safety—assess the scene for hazards
- Mechanism of injury/nature of illness
- Number of patients
- Obtain additional help

**Arrival at the Scene**
- Actions at scene
  - Organized
  - Rapid/efficient
  - Goal of transport in mind
  - Check that all doors and compartments are secure

**Transferring the Patient to the Ambulance**
- Preparing the patient for transport
  - Completion of critical interventions
  - Check dressings and splints
  - Patient covered and secured to moving device
  - Lifting and moving are accomplished safely
En Route to the Receiving Facility

- Notify dispatch
- Ongoing assessment should be continued
- Additional vital sign measurements should be obtained
- Notify receiving facility
- Reassure patient
- Complete prehospital care reports

At Receiving Facility

- Notify dispatch
- Transferring the patient at the facility
  - Reports
    - Complete verbal report is given at bedside
    - Complete written report is completed and left prior to returning to service

En Route to the Station

- Notify dispatch
- Debrief previous call
En Route to the Station

- At station
  - Prepare for the next call
  - Clean and disinfect the ambulance as needed
  - Clean and disinfect ambulance equipment
  - Restock the disposable supplies

Postrun Phase

- Refuel unit
- File reports
- Complete cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Notify dispatch

Air Medical Transport

- Use of air medical transport
  - Situations for possible air medical transport
    - Mechanism of injury considerations
    - Time and distance considerations
Air Medical Transport

- Indications for air medical transport
  - Vehicle rollover with unrestrained passengers
  - Pedestrian struck by a car traveling at a speed >10 mph
  - Fall of >15 feet
  - Motorcyclist thrown from a cycle at a speed >10 mph
  - A collision causing death of an occupant in the same vehicle
  - Ejection of the patient from the vehicle
  - Ground transport time to a trauma center of >15 minutes
  - Extrication time >15 minutes
  - Limited resources of local ground units
  - The patient’s condition would benefit from the rapid delivery of definitive care

Air Medical Transport

- Landing zones
  - Appropriate size and location

Air Medical Transport

- Communication with crew
  - Provide information about safety and landing zone prior to patient information
Air Medical Transport

- Use the clock face method to describe locations

Air Medical Transport

- Safety
  - Approach zone

Air Medical Transport

- Safety
  - Approaching the aircraft
Summary

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