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## Report of the Week

**AEDs save firefighters too.**

**12/10/09**

**Report Number:** 09-0000924

Report Date: 10/15/2009 14:49

### Synopsis

First responder wakes up in hospital.

### Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Driver / Engineer

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 52 - 60

Years of fire service experience: 14 - 16

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

Event type: Non-fire emergency event: auto extrication, technical rescue, emergency medical call, service calls, etc

Event date and time: 12/27/2007 18:00

Hours into the shift:

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event: Clear and Dry

Do you think this will happen again?

What were the contributing factors?

- Other

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Other

### Event Description

I had been dispatched as a first responder to a medical call near my home. I responded, and found that the medical unit was on scene upon my arrival. There were two personnel on the ambulance, and I assisted them in loading the patient into the ambulance. I spotted traffic as the ambulance driver backed out of the driveway. When the driver went enroute to the hospital, I proceeded towards the spot where I had left my medical bag in the yard of the residence. That's all I recall until I awakened in the hospital after coming out of a coma four days later. I had suffered a cardiac arrest. When I had collapsed in the yard, a person next door to the residence saw me on the ground. I was wearing my work uniform with my radio strapped on and the man started transmitting on my radio that he had found a fireman on the ground. Dispatch asked his location and, after giving the information, a nearby engine company turned around and responded to the location where they immediately started CPR procedures. Following a shock from an AED, I was rushed to the ER. I was released following successful treatment.

## **Lessons Learned**

Many new safety initiatives were put into place in our department making a mandatory job-related ability test an annual event for all positions of active duty personnel. Physicals (which were already a requirement) are screened much more closely. I would suggest that if you smoke, QUIT!! Mind your stress levels and seek help when stress leads to fatigue. Follow the guidelines of The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation-16 Life Safety initiatives.

## **Discussion Questions**

Having one of your own go down is one of the most traumatic situations a firefighter can face. The advent of advanced life support, AEDs, and trained first responders has combined to save countless lives. However, the adrenaline rush floods the body fuller when it is one of our own. The lifesaving that occurs in 09-924 was dependent on several factors: the victim having his own radio, an alert bystander, and rapid intervention by the firefighter's colleagues. Once you have read the entire account and the related reports, consider the following:

1. Do all of your members ride with a portable radio when they are on duty?
2. What portion of the fire department's budget is spent on wellness and fitness?
3. How would the scenario in 09-924 play out in your department? Do you have immediate access to an AED and advanced life support?
4. What is your department's protocol for clearing incidents? Do you ever leave a member on scene to clean up or clear the scene alone?
5. When was your last physical? Did it evaluate your fitness for duty as a first responder?

## **Related Reports**

05-329

06-287

07-1051

08-247

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.