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Report of the Week

Is it 'all clear' before or after I hit defibrillate?
04/22/2010

Report Number: 10-0000665

Report Date: 04/01/2010 11:48

Synopsis

All clear not communicated during CPR.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: 24 hours on - 72 hours off

Age: 43 - 51

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region I

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: 07/15/2005 14:00

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?

- Communication

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

Brackets [] denote reviewer de-identification.

The engine company and [ambulance company deleted] were dispatched for an unknown medical. On scene was a 300 lb patient in a 3rd floor apartment with flu-like symptoms and an empty bottle of cold medicine and 1/5 of vodka. While carrying the patient down the narrow stairs on a stair chair, the patient went into cardiac arrest. As we were rushing to put the patient on the stretcher to start CPR and defibrillate, we received a shock signal but the firefighter did not give the all clear and pushed the button. No one was in contact and there were no injuries.

Lessons Learned

Stay focused. While we were rushing down the stairs and focused on the weight of the patient, we lost track and got tunnel vision. Communication is important.

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Discussion Questions

Once you have read the complete account of [10-665](#) and the related the reports, consider the following:

1. Who is "command" on your EMS incidents?
2. How many personnel would be involved in moving a large patient down a flight of stairs?
3. What is your department protocol for AED application and use?
4. Would it be advisable to stop and treat the patient on the stairs versus rushing him down the stairs to perform CPR and defibrillate? Justify your answer.
5. Would a lethal shock be delivered to any personnel who were in contact with the patient in 10-665?

Related Reports – EMS/CPR

[05-357](#)

[06-288](#)

[07-868](#)

[08-281](#)

[09-320](#)

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.