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Report of the Week Rewind

"Station Tours Require Vigilance."

9/27/2012

Report Number: 06-0000396

Report Date: 08/01/2006 15:01

Synopsis

School children exposed to potential needle-sticks during ambulance tour.

Event Description

During a tour of an ALS ambulance children were given the opportunity to walk through the patient area of the ambulance. The children in groups of five would climb into the unit. They would then be seated on the bench. The students would ask questions concerning the equipment. The group age varied from 9- 12 years old. One of the children lifted a door on a sharps box and stuck his finger into the opening. I stopped the child just in time. What a mess that would have been if the child suffered a needle stick. Little things can be a big problem. Think ahead.

Lessons Learned

Watch children during tours at all times! Remove or tape up all sharp box's prior to tours of ambulances.

Reviewers note: In addition to the hazard of sharps containers, it may be better to keep children outside the ambulance compartment due to potential exposure to germs and body fluids. It can also be difficult to monitor large groups in areas where syringes, other medical devices, and narcotics must be closely guarded.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Other : HSO

Department shift: 24 hours on - 72 hours off

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 21 - 23

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Rural

Event Information

Event type: On-duty activities: apparatus and station maintenance, meetings, tours, etc.

Event date and time: 10/10/2005 10:00

Hours into the shift: 5 - 8

Event participation: Involved in the event

Weather at time of event:

Do you think this will happen again? Uncertain

What were the contributing factors?

- Situational Awareness

"Station Tours Require Vigilance."

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What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Life threatening injury

Report of the Week

Welcome to the September ROTW REWIND, featuring Report [06-396](#) from a August 2006 ROTW.

This month's ROTW REWIND reminds us that near misses do not always have to be spectacular events out on the street to have significant consequences. Report [06-396](#) is particularly poignant since we are approaching October and Fire Prevention Month. Fire and emergency departments are heavily involved in public education and fire prevention activities, both in station and at various schools, community fairs, etc. Some stations are on non-stop visits and appearances during the school day. Mixed with even a moderate call load, the school visit, open house or station tour can take on an almost "What can go wrong here?" aura. The answer is plenty. A child's natural curiosity is a factor that has to be considered. The submitter in report [06-396](#) was quick acting and averted what could have been disastrous. Using this account should provide us with reminders that we must remain vigilant, even during seemingly innocuous activities. As you read September's ROTW REWIND, think about what proactive steps you or your organization have taken in order to ensure station and apparatus safety for community visits and public educations. Take a minute to post your comments on the near-miss [Facebook page](#).

"During a tour of an ALS ambulance children were given the opportunity to walk through the patient area of the ambulance. The children in groups of five would climb into the unit. They would then be seated on the bench. The students would ask questions concerning the equipment. The group age varied from 9- 12 years old. One of the children lifted a door on a sharps box and stuck his finger into the opening. I stopped the child just in time. What a mess that would have been if the child suffered a needle stick. Little things can be a big problem. Think ahead."

We have to watch children during tours at all times and possibly remove or tape up all sharp boxes prior to tours of ambulances. We may even want to consider keeping children outside the ambulance compartment due to potential exposure to germs and body fluids. It can also be difficult to monitor large groups in areas where syringes, other medical devices, and narcotics must be closely guarded. After you have reviewed the full report consider the following:

1. What criteria do you use to assign firefighters/EMTs to station tour/fire prevention activities (e.g., # of people expected, ages of group, etc.)?
2. Are the objectives, duties and responsibilities of conducting a tour clearly explained to those members conducting the tour (e.g., station visit, public education demonstration, visitor safety, etc.)?
3. Does your safety briefing to visitors include "steer clear" instructions for station hazards and "what to do" if the station is alerted for a call?
4. Do you let visitors don PPE? If so, has the PPE been cleaned and decontaminated first?

5. What additional steps do you take to ensure the safety of visitors (e.g., no access to shop areas, lockout/tagout of SCBA compressors, no entry to areas where station slide poles may be located, etc.)?

Related Reports- Topical Relation: Public Education, Station Tours, Station Open House

06-201

Submit your report to www.firefighternearmiss.com today on a similar experience.

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.

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