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Report of the Week

**Whose job is it to check for weapons?
10/28/2010**

Report Number: 10-0001020

Report Date: 07/28/2010 19:53

Synopsis

Gun found on patient/suspect.

Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift:

Age:

Years of fire service experience:

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Urban

Event Information

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

Event date and time: 07/25/2010 10:00

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?

- Decision Making
- Human Error
- Situational Awareness
- Training Issue

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Minor injury
- Life threatening injury

Event Description

We were dispatched on an EMS call and, upon arrival, found approximately six police cars and six officers around a handcuffed individual who had been tazed. We learned that we had two patients, the individual in custody (Patient One) and a police officer who had suffered some minor injuries. Patient One had been involved in a spoiled criminal act and was tazed after reaching for his gun. The patient received some minor injuries as a result of the fall. The ambulance arrived and treated the police officer while fire personnel treated Patient One. Approximately 10 minutes after our arrival, it was inquired as to whether or not the suspect had been searched. The two police officers standing near us could not answer the question. As the fire officer on scene, I requested a police officer to search the patient. During the search the police officer immediately found a

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second loaded gun along with additional ammunition, both of which were easily accessible to the patient. The firearm was secured and then the scene was safe.

Lessons Learned

I learned several things from this event. First, safety is a team effort. We are all human and, because of this, all agencies must work together to ensure the safety of one another. The next item is situational awareness. We hear so much about situational awareness in the fire service and how important it is, but do we really practice what we preach? Here is an incident where the events leading up to it should have alerted us to some possibilities that we should have been cognizant of. Whether it is a fire call, EMS call, or hazmat incident, everyone from the officer to the firefighter must truly be aware of what is going on. Thankfully, this scene was made safe before something bad happened. The last item is complacency. Here is another "band-aid call" where complacency could have prevented us from going home to our families. We need to be alert and not complacent from the minute our shift starts.

Report of the Week

"Fire departments" are finding themselves involved more and more with calls for service beyond a structure fire. In fact, many departments are more "all hazards" departments than "fire" departments. Ensuring no incident is taken lightly is not only good advice; it is an essential mantra to live by.

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Crime scenes take firefighters and EMS workers into environs that range from mundane to high risk. The aftermath of violence brings our industry into risk arenas that are not as easily confined, controlled or predictable as structure fires. We study fire behavior, read smoke, and make predictions about real fire travel based on the flammability of contents. However, many of those principles are useless when it comes to predicting the human element. Once you have read the entire account of [10-1020](#), and the related reports, consider the following:

1. What procedures do you follow to ensure scene safety when you arrive at a crime scene?
2. How familiar are you with the law enforcement counterparts in your response area?
3. Where does your agency fit into the law enforcement incident command system at a scene where a violent patient is in custody?
4. Do you have any knowledge of or familiarity with handgun safety?

5. Suppose the handgun fell from the patient's pocket. Should you pick it up?

Related Reports – Topical Relation: Scene Safety

[05-267](#)

[06-143](#)

[07-815](#)

[08-651](#)

[09-706](#)

Have you found yourself involved in a near miss with a violent, or potentially violent, person? Submit your report to www.firefighternearmiss.com today so everyone goes home tomorrow.

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.