



Table Top Training Drills

EMS Calls Can Be Hazardous Too

In many departments, the vast majority of responses are due to emergency medical calls. Reviewing EMS SOP/SOG guidelines are important in the continued training schedule for fire and emergency service personnel. In all scenarios the objective remains the same: the safety of everyone involved.

Consider the following near-miss report located at www.firefighternearmiss.com and take the opportunity to drill as if your unit is handling this call. Discuss your departments SOPs/SOGs and consider the checklist below, provided courtesy of TargetSafety (TargetSafety.com).

Near-miss report [10-404](#)

After extrication ended, I assisted loading one of the critical patients and stayed in the ambulance with him and the medics to help with secondary survey. The patient had serious facial injuries and was fighting the O2 mask on him. I leaned over his head to adjust it, and suddenly he coughed up blood and it got into my eyes. I very quickly rinsed my eyes out and told my officer what had happened. We started our department blood borne pathogen procedure. I am happy to say after several tests (for me and my patient) there was no blood borne pathogens present.

Safety in EMS Operations

EMS operations have a unique set of hazards to guard against:

- EMS personnel are more likely to come into contact with the public.
- The principal hazards include exposure to diseases and contaminated blood and body fluids.
- A number of physical hazards may still be present at the emergency scene, but generally these will be moderate, except at vehicle or transportation accidents.
- Visibility hazards increase as many EMS incidents occur along roadways.
- The potential for thermal, chemical, and electrical hazards is significantly reduced.

Safety Tips for EMS Operations

NFPA 1581 defines the standard protection strategy used by most EMS responders. The use of PPE is critical to establishing a barrier of protection between the responder and potentially contaminating substances. The following safety guidelines are recommended:

- All body fluids should be treated as potentially contaminated.
- Examination gloves should be used for nearly all incidents, regardless of the presence of blood or bodily fluids.
- Splash-resistant eyewear, primarily surgical style masks and goggles, should be used for incidents involving any potential contact with blood or body fluids.
- Fluid-resistant clothing should be used when large quantities of blood or body fluid are expected at the incident, such as in the case of vehicle accidents and childbirth.
- Cleaning gloves should be used for operations involving disinfection of equipment following an incident.