



VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Safe Driving Again & Again & Again & Again

One of the tough things about writing a newsletter for the Medical Transportation Industry is that it's hard to keep writing about the "same old stuff." It's also difficult to NOT write about the "same old stuff", because the "same old stuff" keeps happening.

Go to www.emsnetwork.org and you'll see what I mean. I look at it almost every day. Check out the ambulance crash log. Recently, one was described in which a collision occurred because of the ambulance's failure to "slow down before running a red light". Does anybody really think that it makes sense to "run a red light"? The International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends coming to a complete stop at all red lights and stop signs. Such stopping is estimated to add 12 seconds to a response time. In this case, no one was apparently seriously hurt, but the victim said that she could hear the ambulance, but not see it until it hit her. Validates "Arrive Alive Do No Harm", doesn't it?



Another log entry describes a crash in which the ambulance driver was declared "at fault" by police, but not charged because she was "fulfilling her duties". In this case, the ambulance was running hot with lights activated, but no sirens used and ran a controlled intersection. Unfortunately, the patient, who was being transported for a medical condition, sustained critical injuries. A "passenger" suffered serious injuries.

One that is hard to stomach describes an ambulance driver who, as the result of a plea bargain, will spend about two years in prison for killing two men in a crash. An hour after the crash, the driver's blood alcohol was 0.07%. A mathematical technique called extrapolation was used to determine that the alcohol level at the time of the crash was 0.092%. There are legal arguments about the appropriateness of using extrapolation. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the driver drove through a steady red light at between 64 and 68 mph. The emergency lights were used, but the sirens weren't activated until 2.25 seconds before the crash. The article doesn't indicate how that time period was determined, but at 65 mph the vehicle would travel about 214 feet in that time. How would you feel if somebody got through your selection process, was watched by your management team, and negotiated a guilty plea for involuntary manslaughter, drunken driving and reckless endangerment? Isn't it about time that we've all had enough of the "same old stuff"?

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