



VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

Mike Szczygiel (Segal)
888-969-8033
meszczygiel@thomcoins.com

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) - Importance of Having A SOP

There are four key elements that provide the foundation for the operational procedures for most organizations. These are the Management Philosophy, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Training Program and Evaluation Program. The Management Philosophy sets the tone for the procedures in the SOP.

The Management Philosophy is typically a straightforward, single page document prepared by the senior person in the organization that describes how he or she expects the organization to perform its mission. It also describes any action that is not acceptable under any conditions. For example, one international organization with thousands of trucks on the road daily has a policy that seatbelts must be worn. Vehicle operators who are observed not wearing a seat belt are immediately dismissed from the company. Management feels strongly that wearing seat belts saves lives. The Management Philosophy will often contain other subjects that reflect the organizational objectives. It is an important document and should be the first page in the organization's SOP.

The SOP describes how organizations will conduct both emergency and non-emergency operations. The SOP should be coordinated with other emergency responders that your organization will normally work with to ensure that you have compatible operating procedures, command structure, and communication interfaces.

SOPs often translate vague state statutes into a specific set of procedures. For example, many states endorse the concept of Due Regard by Statute or use it to formulate laws to govern emergency vehicle operations. When "a reasonable careful person performing similar duties and under similar circumstances, would act in the same manner" in which our drivers behave, Due Regard is achieved. Even if your State is legislatively silent on Due Regard, it must be part of your SOP, because it will be used to determine fault in right of way issues.

Next Week: Due Regard in your SOP

About Billy Rutherford

Billy Rutherford, MS, President, American Integrated Training Systems, Inc. (AITS). As a contractor, Billy managed the development of the US Department of Transportation, Emergency Vehicle Course (EVO) National Standard Curriculum (Ambulance) and the Train the Trainer (T3) Course to qualify personnel to conduct the National Standard Curriculum. AITS conducts the T3 courses nationwide. The schedule for these courses is published at www.AITStraining.com



Public Relations First Aid- A Resource Kit For Maintaining A Positive Public Image- Part 3

DEFINE A SPOKESPERSON

At some point, if it hasn't happened already, there will be a need for a spokesperson to address the press and the general public. In the event your EMS response team is involved in a vehicle accident and someone is fatally injured, you'll want a trained, well spoken individual to address the media. We suggest that you assign this role to only one "go-to" person. This way, all the facts of the event will come from one source. The comments and statements will be more consistent and the media will feel more comfortable knowing this person as the point of contact for your organization. Below are some qualities to look for in choosing a spokesperson:

- Make sure they are proficient in public speaking and have experience handling the press; the press can be a little forceful so make sure that this person can take control of the situation.
- Do not assign this role to someone in-house unless they are trained to handle public relations. Contact a Public Relations (P.R.) firm in your area that is familiar with the community and current with the culture.
- After conferring with your attorneys and gaining their approval, make sure the spokesperson only states the verified facts of the event.
- Make sure your spokesperson can represent your organization in a positive light and reflect the organization's core mission "to save lives".

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