



# VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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## Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – Getting Organized

The SOP format should be user friendly. It should be distributed to all employees in a manner that demonstrates that the employee received a specific, numbered copy, signed for it, read it, understands it and knows that he/she is required to follow it. The FEMA FA-197 gives some sample formats.

It is easier to navigate the SOP if you use a numbering system that groups like policies. For example, 100 could be the administrative section, 200 Medical procedures, etc. An SOP may look like this:

Number: 300-001

Subject: Wearing a Seatbelt in Ambulances and Wheel chair Vans

Policy: All occupants in Ambulances and Wheelchair Vans must wear a seatbelt.

Date Established: 18 February, 2008. Scheduled Review Date: 18 February, 2009

Actual Date Reviewed; \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: Signed by COO or Appropriate Authority

Procedures:

01. The person in charge of the vehicle shall verify that all occupants are wearing a seatbelt before the vehicle moves.
02. Persons rendering aid to patients may temporarily remove their seatbelt to provide essential medical treatment or other assistance.
03. Allowing occupants to be transported without wearing a seatbelt will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Penalties should be included.

It is common for policies contained in the SOP to be numbered, limited to a page or two, prepared on a standard 8.5 X 11 inch paper and placed in a three ring binder. The SOP should be available at all work sites and when possible in each vehicle. Some organizations make a pocket-sized edition of the operational section of the SOP.

Access to supervisory personnel should be immediately available whenever SOP questions arise.

Operating without an SOP, or with a poorly written or outdated one, is inefficient and wasteful. It also exposes your employees and the public at large to serious injuries and death. Develop an SOP, maintain it and get it in the hands of your employees.

### 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 (EVOC) 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](http://www.AITStraining.com)

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*Public Relations  
First Aid- A  
Resource Kit For  
Maintaining A  
Positive Public  
Image- Part 7*

*KNOW YOUR  
MEDIA CONTACTS*

Establishing trust is paramount in a relationship; this applies to your relationship with the local press. If you haven't already, get to know your local community media contacts. Take the time to talk to them about local events and happenings around town and get to know them and their publication. Personalize your company to the local media. If you've decided to go with a P.R. firm, make sure they have a good relationship with the local media. This will come in handy when news, either good or bad happens. Here is a list of people you should make a point to know:

- Reporters – Whether it's a reporter for a human interest or an investigative story, you should know their name and which publication, news or TV organization they work for.
  - Freelance Reporters – They are great assets to your firm if you can maintain a close relationship with them. Who knows? They may even help you write a story or become a gatekeeper to higher-ups.
  - Editors – Getting in good with an editor just might influence the exposure that your organization needs.
  - Producers– They wear many hats but sometimes producers are in charge of the quality and scheduling for each broadcast. Getting to know them might land your spokesperson a spot on their show.
- Gatekeepers - As mentioned above, get to know a freelance reporter or someone who can introduce you to key members of the local media.