



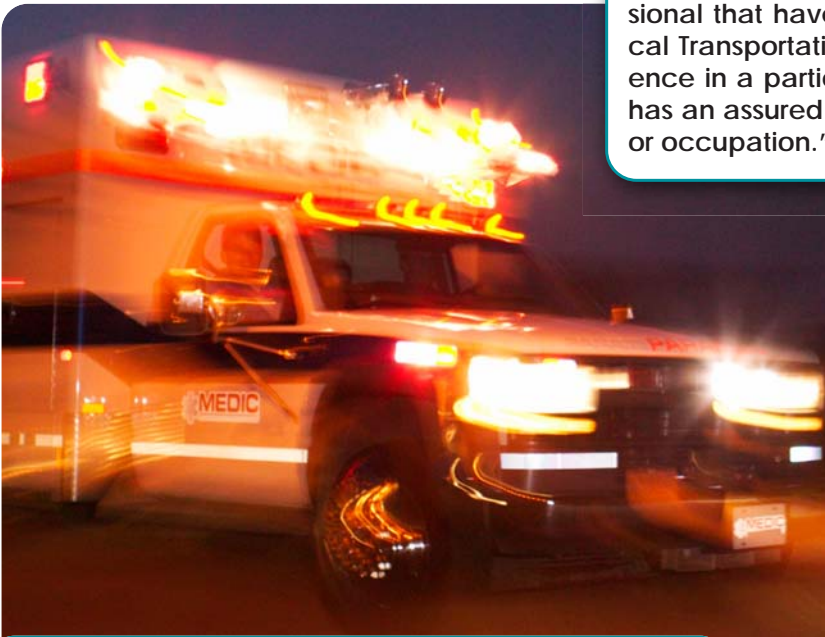
VITALS

A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Are You A Professional Driver?

There are two dictionary definitions of professional that have particular importance in Medical Transportation. "Having great skill or experience in a particular field or activity." "One who has an assured competence in a particular field or occupation."



"Great skill" and "assured competence" can be derived from experience. But keep in mind that experience is defined as "active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill." If driving for you is a passive process that you never think about, your tenure as a driver may be nothing more than an opportunity for you to ingrain bad habits.

Are your fender-benders, backing incidents and near misses somebody else's fault? Do you find that you're often angry while driving? Do you eat, drink, smoke or use your cell phone while you drive? Do you have a battlefield mentality behind the wheel? That is, is your concept of defensive driving based on the idea that the best defense is a strong offense? Do you feel that driving is a competition? Do you think that defensive driving makes you a chicken or a sissy? If you answered yes to these questions, what do you think your stress hormone levels are when you drive?

Isn't it silly to be alone in the front of a vehicle creating a hostile work environment for yourself? Do you really think you exercise your best judgment when angry? How many little blow ups can you have before you reach full blown road rage? Road rage has been around for a long time. In "Oedipus the King", written by Sophocles in 420BC, Oedipus kills his father because of a road rage incident. What do you think traffic was like 2400 years ago? Is road rage a potentially innate tendency that we must guard against?

If you're truly a professional driver, shouldn't you expect more from yourself than you expect from the general public? You've received formal driver training. Have you thought about it since you got out of class? If you don't make a conscious effort to improve your driving, drive more safely, and be a good example to the public every time you're behind the wheel, you might be getting paid to drive, but you're not a professional.

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