



VITALS

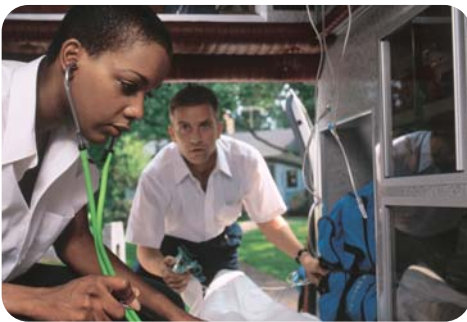
A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

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Lifting and Engineering Controls-Part 1



According to an article published in the December 2007 American Journal of Industrial Medicine, "New research suggests that at any given time, almost 10% of the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics in the United States miss work because of injuries or illnesses suffered on the job." In other words, on any given day our collective workforce is short by about 10%. One way to think about this is that if an employee got hurt or sick because of something that happened in the workplace, we have a system failure that allowed it to happen. No, this does not mean that every bad thing that happens is management's fault. System failures include the performance of tasks in an unsafe manner by employees. Failures also occur when we fail to identify and mitigate the risk imposed by tasks that are unsafe because of their cumulative effects. Even when performed correctly, lifting can cause wear and tear on backs.



A 2004 NIOSH paper by Conrad showed that "over-exertion, due to lifting, carrying, twisting and bending, is the primary cause of musculoskeletal disorders that account for approximately 50% of all injuries to firefighters and emergency rescue personnel." Surprisingly, a study by Feldstein published in *The Journal of Occupational Medicine*, showed that classes in body mechanics and training in lifting techniques improve skills in the short term, but have "no impact in reducing injuries or musculoskeletal pain." Follow-up studies show that emphasizing the use of proper body mechanics in conjunction with the implementation of task specific patient handling equipment is mandatory for achieving a successful injury prevention program.

The American Nursing Association issued a policy statement in 2003 "supporting actions and policies that result in the elimination of manual patient lifting to promote a safe environment of care". We can't eliminate lifting, but we can identify lifting situations with higher risk and use task specific patient handling equipment (engineering controls) with proper body mechanics so nobody gets hurt. More to come.



Sign Up for The

EVOC - "T3" Train-the-Trainer Course

August 19 - 21, 2008

American Integrated Training Systems, Inc. (AITS) in cooperation with STAT EMS, Flint, Michigan will be conducting a Train the Trainer (T3) course August 19 - 21, 2008. This course qualifies EVOC trainers to conduct the National Standard Curriculum. The course will qualify instructors to present the classroom portion of the training and provide an orientation to the practical driving exercises. Each participant will act as a student and coach for ambulance driving exercises.

This course is appropriate for Wheelchair Van, Ambulance and Fire Apparatus training. The cost for this course is \$575.00 for each participant. Registration form and brochure may be downloaded at www.aitstraining.com. For further information contact Billy Rutherford at 703.440.0914 or brutherf@aol.com

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