



# VITALS

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A Weekly Safety Newsletter For Medical Transport Professionals

## Safety Training: Think Of It As Special Education



Re-certification, ACLS, BLS, CPR, AED, PHTLS, PALS, EMTALA, HIPAA, OSHA, blood borne pathogens, Medicare compliance, and documentation are just some of the topics that must be addressed by ongoing training. Most of these are required for the regulatory compliance we need to keep our doors open. When we train somebody we “coach them in or accustom them to a mode of behavior or performance” or “make them proficient with specialized instruction and practice”. It makes sense that we give people the information they need to do their jobs, monitor their performance and give them more information as needed. With the resources that remain, how can we develop an effective safety training program?

When the American Heart Association (AHA) changes its standards it must be an expensive, time-consuming process. The results will impact the lives of millions of people. I bet the AHA uses the input from a large group of people to analyze a huge amount of scientific data and practical experience before it makes any changes. Maybe a similar approach to safety training is a good idea.

Make the goal of your safety training to educate. That is, “provide with training for some particular purpose.” Our purpose is to make everybody safe, that is, “not apt or able to cause or incur danger, harm or evil.” Our first step is to look for danger, harm or evil. Every member of your organization should be involved in identifying unsafe conditions, reporting them and removing them. Management systems such as direct observation and onboard monitoring are critical. Monitor your loss runs and look for near-misses. Use this information to develop objectives for your safety education. Never assume that personnel are aware of something unless you directly inform them and receive evidence that they understand what you’ve given them. Make your formal safety education part of your daily routine by encouraging informal discussion of safety topics.

To be effective, safety education must combine classroom, hands on, and real world experiences. Don’t forget about videos and internet resources. Have all of your drivers completed the “Arrive Alive Do No Harm” training? The items listed in the first paragraph deal with specific job components. Safety education deals with everything. There are no patches, cards or endorsements that guarantee safety. The only evidence for the effectiveness of safety education is the behavior of every member of your organization every day, which is what makes safety training a *SPECIAL EDUCATION*.



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