TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Strains and Sprains: It Takes Teamwork!

FOCUS: Patient transport is a major source of strains and sprains.

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

CHALLENGE

Strains and sprains represent the largest category of injury to emergency personnel. Cold weather provides additional challenges such as problems with good footing and stiffness. It's important to continue to stretch to keep the body as limber as possible when working in this situation.

During the transport of patients we are faced with an ever growing problem of obesity. The patients are heavier each year and exposing EMS personnel to increasing stresses when lifting. In addition, the residential areas have less than "model" physical layouts which make it more difficult to maneuver our equipment. Too often, the patient's condition prohibits the use of equipment that would make transport easier.

Using good lifting techniques and body mechanics are essential to help reduce injuries. Improved equipment and proper body mechanics can reduce these types of injuries significantly. However, we must never forget the importance of teamwork. Communication between EMS teammates is very critical. Planning is also very important each time we move patients. The terrain, weather, building layout and physical size and mobility of the patient are issues that must always be addressed during transport. We must always consider getting additional help if necessary before we subject the patient or team members to potential injury!

DISCUSSION

- Do we consider weather conditions that could impact our rescue activity?
- When purchasing replacement equipment are we looking for ergonomic improvements?
- What problems have you encountered during the transport of a patient?
- What problems occur due to the differences in height of EMS personnel?
- What can improve teamwork during transport?
- Does our department place enough training emphasis on the "unusual" conditions faced during transport?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

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