TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Strains and Sprains: We Must Work Safer

FOCUS: Patient transport is a major source of strains and sprains for emergency services personnel. Winter weather creates many additional risks. We must take extra precautions as the seasons change.

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

CHALLENGE

Strains and sprains continue to represent the third largest category of injury to emergency services personnel. Statistics indicate that patient transfers are a major source of injuries that result in strains and sprains.

Winter weather conditions provide additional challenges to the safe transport of patients. The lower temperatures contribute to problems such as increased stiffness due to exposure to the cold. It's important to continue to dress appropriately, and stretch to keep the body as warm and limber as possible when working in these conditions.

Slippery ground surfaces also increase the risk to EMS personnel as well as those being aided. Injuries from falls often result in strains and sprains. In addition, some 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! We must remain healthy to provide aid!

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 can improve teamwork during transport?
- Does our department place enough training emphasis on the "unusual" conditions faced during transport?
- Does our culture support getting help when needed?

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

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