

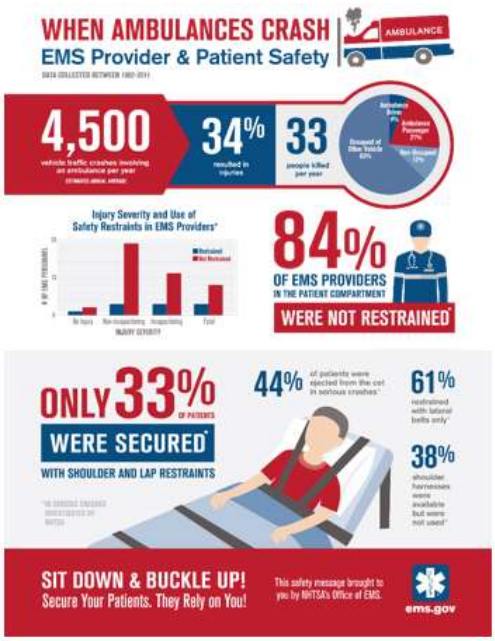
Thanks Justin!

Moving on to lesson five, we will be talking about ambulance crashes and safe driving. We'll discuss common causes of accidents and how to avoid collisions.

Good Studying

Common Crash Causes

- Excessive speed
- Intersections
- Failure to yield
- Siren syndrome
- Distracted driving
- Driver Fatigue
- Inclement weather



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2

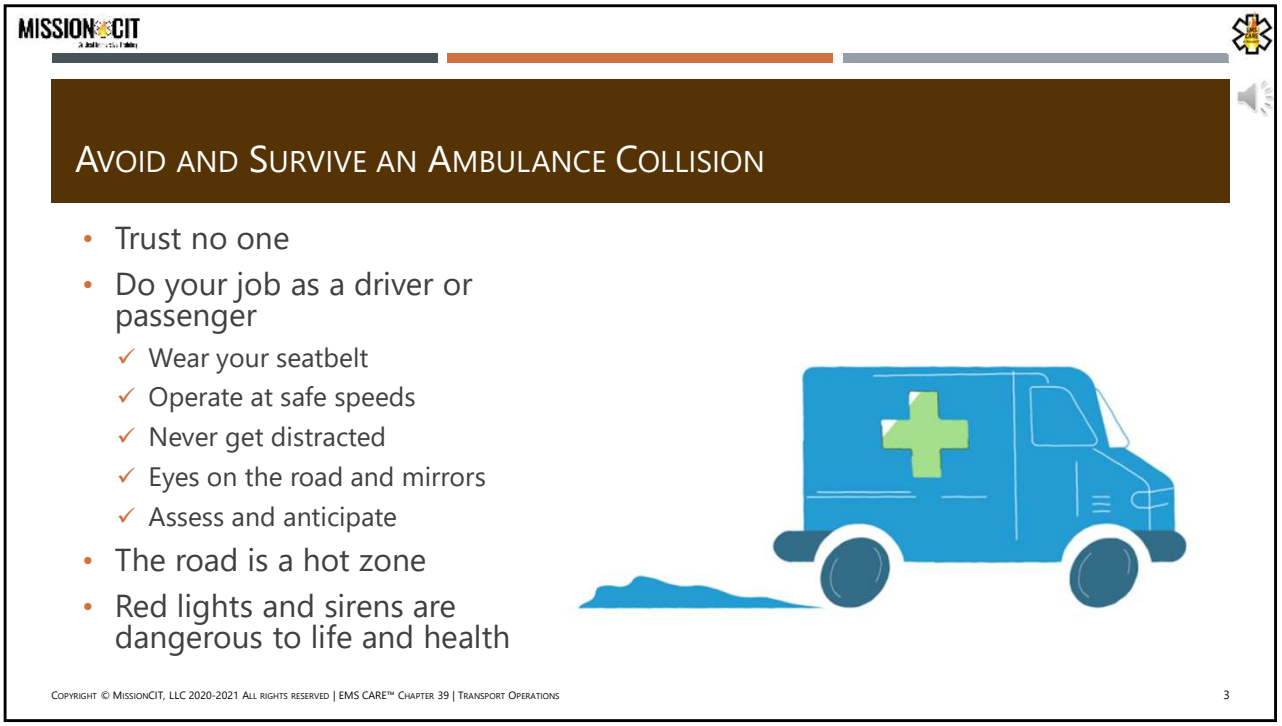
An increasing source of public concern is ambulance accidents. They are a significant risk to pre-hospital care providers, the patients they are carrying, persons in other vehicles, and pedestrians. According to a 20-year National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study, there is an average of 4,500 crashes involving ambulances every year.

There are several factors when considering the causes of an ambulance accident. In some cases, injuries result because a patient is improperly secured, or objects

within the ambulance cab are improperly stored. Some common causes of accidents include unnecessary excessive speeding, driving through intersections without making sure that other cars are not approaching, and failure to yield to other vehicles. Another common cause, Siren syndrome or sirencide is the tendency to drive faster and aggressively when operating under emergency conditions with the siren activated. Distracted driving is also a major factor in collisions. The driver should refrain from operating other devices, including reading map books or utilizing mobile computers while driving the vehicle.

Driver fatigue results from extended or inconsistent shift schedules, interrupted sleep patterns, and extended periods of physical activities.

Driving in inclement weather conditions like fog, wind, rain, ice, and snow can also affect vehicle operation.



Ambulance operators must be effective at controlling their vehicles in varying environments and conditions without compromising ambulance occupants' safety or other road users.

Whether responding to an emergency, transporting a patient, driving to a posting location, or returning to quarters, here are actions for every EMS provider to take to avoid and survive a collision.

- Never trust another driver to do the right thing. Drive

defensively, anticipating the drivers around you will make the worst possible decisions.

- Secondly, do your job right, as an ambulance driver and as a passenger.

Follow fundamentals including:

- Wearing your seatbelt, always.
- Operate at speeds safe for road conditions.
- Never be distracted by a smartphone, a radio, an MDT, or food as you drive.
- Keep your eyes on the road and mirrors.
- Assess hazards and anticipate how you will respond to a dynamic operating environment.
- The road is a hot zone; minimize your exposure time to all other vehicle traffic. Put as much distance as possible between you and those vehicles.
- One of the most common attributes of an ambulance collision is the use of red lights, and sirens giving an ambulance the right of way, and permission to operate above the posted speed limit. Exemptions from normal traffic laws are allowed in emergency mode, but the liability still exists.

The following points describe best practices associated with defensive driving elements, namely: safe ambulance behavior, blind spot handling, maintaining a

safe following distance, recovering from a near miss, continuing patient compartment awareness, keeping a safe speed, and safely turning the ambulance.



It is the responsibility of the Emergency Response crew to observe safety protocols during the transport of patients.

Care should be taken that:

- All personnel and others riding in, or on the apparatus, are correctly seated and secured with safety belts.
- All patients are properly secured, and all stretcher straps are appropriately in place and tightened.
- All equipment, including cab areas, the rear of ambulances, and compartments are appropriately

secured.

- Sirens will often provide the earliest detection in urban environments, while the lighting system offers improved ability to locate the emergency vehicle.

Transport with due regard means driving in a manner to avoid any predictable collision. Safety studies have shown that drivers of other vehicles do not usually see or hear ambulances, until they are within 50 to 100 feet. The emergency vehicle driver must provide adequate warning to others by using the warning devices and controlling their speed, to allow other motorists time to react to their warning.

Federal Initiatives (Pre-Hospital Trauma Care)

- Monitor and analyze ground ambulance crashes
  - ✓ Administering grants for ambulance purchases
  - ✓ Communication systems
  - ✓ Training programs
  - ✓ Traffic related system improvements
  - ✓ National standard curricula for EMS
  - ✓ Build/buy safer ambulances



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Congress passed the Highway Safety Act in 1966, which established the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration within the Department of Transportation. Because motor vehicle crash injuries constituted a substantial proportion of the EMS patient load, NHTSA was charged with improving EMS systems by administering grants for ambulance purchases, communications systems, and training programs, and with supporting other traffic-related system improvements. NHTSA furthered its role in the advancement of pre-hospital care, by developing

national standard curricula for the education of EMS personnel, and by lending its foresight, leadership, and commitment to the development of EMS systems. NHTSA's Office of EMS has partnered with a number of organizations, to develop resources that help EMS agencies understand ambulance crashes, transport patients safely, report ambulance and equipment defects and build or buy safer ambulances.

This brings us to the end of the ground ambulance crashes Chapter. Now, Justin will take you through Air Medical Transport.