

Thank you, Missah!

The case study in the previous lesson clearly shows the importance of wearing seat belts and restraint systems, and that's why in this lesson, we will talk about how you can buckle up yourself and your patient, regardless of the situation on hand. We will also discuss some safe driving precautions that can keep you safe on the roads.

Guidelines for Seat Belts and Restraint Systems

- Remove CPR seat
- Use mechanical CPR devices
- Ensure emergency items are readily available
- Necessary training to EMTs
- Understand the role of seat belts and restraints
- Avoid side-facing seats
- Treat before transportation



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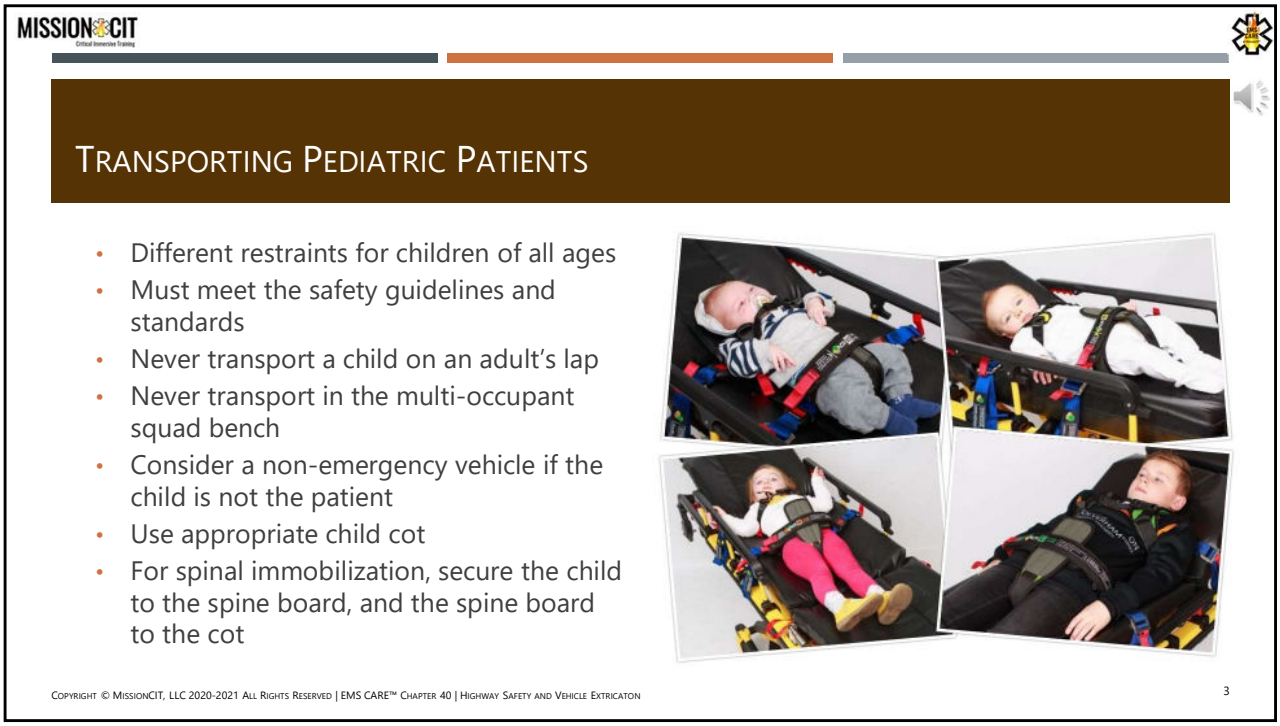
Over the last few years, many government and non-government organizations have been working on guidelines and laws that require the EMS workers to buckle up when they are inside the ambulance.

However, the common reason for not wearing seat belts is that EMS workers find it hard to access patients and provide any emergency care as required. Also, there's a need for this personnel to walk around the cabin to access different equipment, so using a restraint made it

difficult.

To address these concerns and practices, a lot of research has been conducted and some of the key outcomes are:

- Remove the CPR seat as it is the most dangerous position to sit.
- Use mechanical CPR devices to avoid the need to get up to do CPR.
- Alter the design of the ambulance to ensure that emergency items were readily accessible.
- Provide the necessary training to EMTs to change their perception about their job, where they don't take their safety seriously.
- Emphasize the need to secure patients, equipment, and themselves with seat belts and restraints because an injured EMT can't help the patient.
- Avoid side-facing seats altogether.
- A lot of research is going into restraint systems to allow EMTs to be restrained while providing care to the patients.
- Provide as many interventions and care as possible to the patient before transporting them.
- Reinforce the need to buckle up.



Here are some considerations to keep in mind while transporting pediatric patients:

- All ambulances must have restraint systems for securing children from newborn and up.
- All these restraints must meet the safety guidelines and must have been tested against the FMVSS 213 ATD injury standard.
- The child restraint systems should be attached only to those seating positions that pass the appropriate standard when the system is tested as a whole.
- A child passenger, even if it's a newborn, must never

be transported on an adult's lap.

- A child must never be transported in the multi-occupant squad bench located in the patient compartment.
- If a child is accompanying an injured patient, it's best to transport the child in a non-emergency vehicle. If that's not possible, use the appropriate restraint systems.
- If the patient is the child, make sure to secure the child firmly in a child cot that meets the existing standards.
- For a child who requires spinal immobilization, secure the child to a spine board and also, secure the board to a cot.

Following these guidelines diligently can reduce the possibilities of injuries and crashes while transporting children and adults, besides safeguarding yourself.

Checking the Vehicles

- NIOSH partnering for crash tests
- Check if ambulances meet the guidelines
- Do a routine check based on a checklist
- If you're the driver, adjust the mirrors to suit your preferences





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Since the early 2000s, NIOSH has been partnering with ambulance manufacturers to do crash tests of ambulances, cots, seats, cabinets, and equipment mounts to ensure that they are safe during a crash. New test procedures and resulting standards were formulated during this time.

These daily checks are mandated by law and expected by patients and should be a routine right after you come on a shift.

As an EMT, here are some things you must check routinely to ensure that the ambulance meets the specific guidelines laid down by different government authorities.

- Do an inventory check where you ensure that certain medical supplies are well-stocked with medicines and equipment as mandated by the local protocols.
- Do a rig check to be familiar with where things are stocked in the ambulance.
- Operate the radio and see if it works fine.
- Check the belts and restraint systems.
- Consider checking the brakes, odometers, and tires of the ambulance as well.
- Adjust the mirrors to suit your height and convenience, especially if you're the driver.

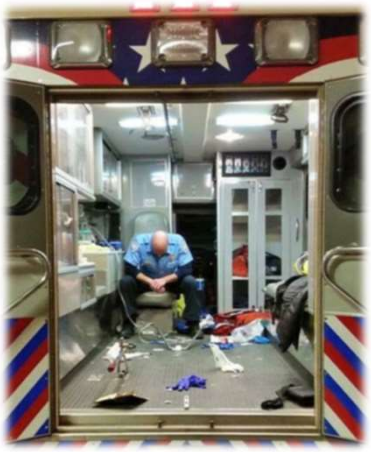
It's always a good idea to have a checklist and run through them to ensure that your ambulance has all the equipment, medical supplies, and safety gear needed to attend to medical emergencies.

PEDESTRIANS

- See pedestrians while driving
- Be on the lookout
- Drive consciously in school zones and residential areas
- Manage your fatigue







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While driving, you're likely to see pedestrians, including children and seniors on the road, so make sure you are constantly looking out and are conscious of their presence. Due to their age, children and seniors may do some actions that you may not expect, and this significantly increases the chances of accidents.

To avoid such untoward accidents, slow down and drive consciously near school zones, parks, and residential areas.

The nature of your work can make you drowsy and distracted while driving, but this can be dangerous for you and the pedestrians and other cars on the road. So, use appropriate fatigue management practices and avoid conversations while you drive.

Night Operations

- Use rear-facing warning lights and reflectors
- Wear reflective vests, certified by ANSI
- Retro-reflective decal and markings on the side of your ambulance
- Designate a crew member as a spotter







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Since night operations are fairly common in your line of work, here are some tips to consider.

Most emergency vehicles tend to use forward-facing lights, so the cars coming in the opposite direction can see them and possibly even slow down. But what about the cars that come from behind? Instead of assuming that the car coming behind will see you, be open to using rear-facing warning lights and reflectors to let the cars behind know that you are parked at a location for an

emergency.

If you have to attend an emergency on the road, wear reflective vests and outerwear, preferably those that are certified by the American National Standards Institute, as it will tell the other people and cars around that you're attending to an on-road emergency.

Retro-reflective decal or markings on the side of your ambulance are also essential during night operations.

Be careful while backing as it can be difficult to spot people or small vehicles behind your vehicle. Adjust the mirrors and look for signage. If it's too dark, consider asking one of the members of the EMT crew to be a spotter, who should be 8 to 10 feet at the rear of the vehicle on the driver's side. If you're the driver and you can't find the spotter, stop driving.

Above everything, your safety takes precedence, so trust your instincts, and do all that's needed to keep you and your crew members, patients, and others on the road safe.

With this, we come to the end of this lesson, the next lesson deals with the key topic, vehicle extrication.