

PATIENT HANDLING FIRE/EMS

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the general causes of patient drops
- Understand safe patient handling practices

The last thing any of us wants to do is harm a patient; a patient that needs our services, our professionalism, and our compassion. Yet, all too often, proper patient handling basics are dismissed. Inappropriate lifting or movement of patients can cause injury to you and your patient. Industry statistics show that patient drops are a leading cause of claims of negligence. The EMS industry estimates there are approximately 42,000 patient drops annually.

GENERAL CAUSES

- Improper selection and use of equipment
- Improper balance
- Improper evaluation of scene hazards
- Improper maintenance of equipment
- Lack of planning
- Equipment failure/malfunctions

SAFE PATIENT HANDLING PRACTICES

- Assess the scene for hazards that may prevent moving the patient safely (soft ground, holes, rocks, inclines/declines, etc.)
- Select the proper equipment for the circumstances
- Know the weight of the patient and equipment you are lifting
- Know your abilities and limitations
- Use a proper lifting technique
- Communicate your intentions with the crew
- If you need help, get it

POLICY

Discuss all county policies relating to handling patients.

CLOSING

Encourage discussion about the presentation and the department's policies.