

“Everyone Goes Home”

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Everyone goes home is the goal of America’s fire service. It is the goal of every fire chief, every company officer, firefighter, and family member. The objective of this article is to reach the chief, company officer, and the apparatus committee members.

When it comes to safety, you talk the talk, but do you walk the walk. Billy G. and Gordon G. have shown you the way, Dave Daniels, IAFF, & Company are doing the heavy lifting for you, and Mary Beth M & the IAFC EMS Section have told you what to lookout for. As tough as this bunch is, I found a chick who is even tougher.

Nadine Levick is an Australian born hard hitting woman from down under. First a little background.

Nadine Levick MD, MPH, is the recipient of the prestigious International Society for Automotive Engineers WEC/Breed Women’s leadership award in 2003 for her contribution to EMS transport safety research and practice. Dr. Levick who holds a Masters in Public Health from Johns Hopkins in Health Policy and Management focused in Injury Prevention and Control, and an Australian trained board certified Emergency Medicine physician has conducted key research internationally in the field of safety of EMS transport, in addition to other cross disciplinary research in the field of safety and injury control. Dr. Levick has published the lead engineering papers globally on EMS vehicle safety, and has a leadership role in EMS Safety globally, contributing to the development of the field of EMS Safety, coordinating the first international vehicle safety symposium and contributing to the field in the USA, Australia, Europe and the UK.

Here are a couple of body blows from Nadine. If you and your people do not stop at red lights and stop signs when running hot, you are STUPID! Only an idiot can ignore the current data on intersection accidents. For EMS transport, check your “Code Three” return saves verses the number of people we kill and injure in intersection motor vehicle crashes annually in the United States.

The front of your ambulance has to meet federal standards. The interior patient compartment does not. But you love unpadded edges, lack of four point harnesses, and seats that can not adjust to get our medics closer to the patient while still seat belted. A high percentage of head injuries sustained by our personnel in the back of an ambulance could be avoided by wearing a bicycle helmet. Imagine what a stylish, well constructed helmet could do for them.

Can all the stuff in the back of our ambulance or the ambulance your people ride in withstand a 20 MPH impact? A lot of this stuff injures and kills our people. This includes patients blasting forward into the attendant’s crotch because lateral cot straps alone will not arrest the forward movement of the patient. It is called physics, check it out sometime.

Company Officer, EMS Chief, and Fire Chief get off your butt; go check your equipment, your SOPs, and what your people are really doing in the streets.

You might want to checkout this website as well. www.objectivesafety.net

We can fix vehicles, most of the time we can fix bones, but you just can’t fix STUPID.

EMS and the Fire Service must push for standards to improve patient compartment safety. Why would you buy an ambulance with design flaws when most of the engineered solutions are not very expensive?

Dr. Levick has a tough message for us. Maybe it’s because we just don’t get it!