

Ambulance Safety *The Delaware Experience*



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Ambulance Safety *The Delaware Experience*

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Chair, NAEMT EMS Safety Course Committee



- Representing:
 - Sussex County EMS
 - Delaware Volunteer Firefighter's Association
 - National Association of EMT's

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Ambulance Safety *The Delaware Experience*

- Delaware's EMS System
- Events of 2008
- What we've learned
- What's being done
- What we hope to do

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Delaware's EMS System

- Advanced Life Support
 - Full time County non-transporting agencies (3)
 - Delaware State Police Aviation Unit
- Basic Life Support Care & Transport
 - 65 Volunteer Fire & EMS Depts.
- Statewide Trauma System
 - 1 Level I Trauma Center
 - 5 Level III Trauma Centers



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January 28, 2008 6:11 a.m.

- Ambulance returning from call, stopped at stop sign
- 2 attendants in front, paramedic in rear
- SUV leaves roadway, becomes airborne, striking right side of patient compartment
- Paramedic hurled through hole left by SUV

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January 28, 2008

- Paramedic was unrestrained in seat at head of patient
 - Seat belt too short
- Driver & EMT were restrained

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January 28, 2008

- Paramedic and driver critical, transported via helicopter to Level I Trauma Center
- EMT transported to local Level III Trauma Center
- SUV driver pronounced dead at scene

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January 28, 2008

- Paramedic treated for severe head injury, currently remains on light duty
- Driver treated for head and spinal injuries, has since recovered
- EMT treated and released

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June 17, 2008 2:40 a.m.

- While transporting a patient from nursing home to hospital, ambulance swerves to avoid deer in roadway, sideswipes tree
- Paramedic and EMT in rear compartment with patient

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- Paramedic seated on bench seat transported to Level III Trauma Center in cardiac arrest, pronounced dead at hospital
- Patient ejected, pronounced dead @ scene
- EMT seated in captain's chair and driver uninjured



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Problems Identified

- Integrity of patient compartment severely compromised in both crashes
- Paramedic inability to utilize restraint due to size (January 28th)
- Adequacy of patient/cot security unknown (June 17th)

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Delaware Responds

- Ambulance services required to carry seat belt extenders for large personnel
- Advocated with NFPA to establish Ambulance Safety Standard committee
- Established Ambulance Safety Committee within State EMS Oversight Committee
- Revised and expanded driver training program
- Protocol revision ties use of warning lights and sirens to medical need

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NAEMT Responds

- Position Statement on EMS Ambulance Safety
- Position Statement on EMS Patient Safety and Wellness
- Development of EMS Safety Course
 - Increase awareness of safety practices
 - Reduce number & severity of injuries

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Summary

- What we know
 - One Delaware paramedic was killed, another critically injured within a six month period
 - We believe that ambulance design played a role in the severity of these incidents
- What we don't know
 - What design changes would provide a safer environment for our paramedics, EMT's and patients?
- What we need to know
 - How can we best prevent this from ever happening again?

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FOR US,
it's personal

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Questions??

- Please raise your hand or type in the message box