A Culture of Safety in EMS Systems

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) believe that safety must become a foundational component of every EMS system. Providing high-quality emergency medical services (EMS) requires that we understand risk and embrace practices to prevent harm to patients, EMS personnel and members of our community. It is the EMS physician’s role to develop and support a culture of safety in EMS systems.

We believe:

- EMS systems should support the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of comprehensive system-wide safety, quality, and risk management programs
- EMS safety and comprehensive risk management should be emphasized in both initial and continuing education for EMS providers
- EMS systems should implement and support a just culture to facilitate honest and prompt reporting of risk and error and to support analysis of near miss and adverse events in an environment of professionalism and accountability
- Integrated EMS safety data systems should be created to promote evaluation of safety programs and to promote research that advances understanding of safety for EMS providers, systems, and patients
- EMS physicians should advocate for EMS safety-related programs coordinated at the local, regional, state, and federal levels based on evidence-based practice and benchmarks
- EMS physicians should evaluate technologies and equipment for improvements in safety for patients, medical providers, and the public.
- EMS physicians should evaluate protocols, policies, and standing orders for opportunity to limit risk and increase safety by design.