

HALIFAX FIRE DEPARTMENT SOG 34	STRETCHER OPERATION
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Purpose

To create a guideline for the use of stretchers that decreases the risk of injury to patients and caregivers.

Scope

This SOG applies to all members of the Halifax Fire Department

Back Ground

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services, has reported an increased number of accidents involving the improper use of ambulance stretchers by EMS providers.

The Office of Emergency Medical Services requires all ambulances services to develop guidelines to ensure that ambulance stretchers are utilized and maintained properly.

Guideline

- A. All new employees must receive stretcher training before they are allowed to operate ambulance stretchers.
- B. All employees must compete refresher training on an annual basis in the use of ambulance stretchers.
- C. Stretchers shall be inspected weekly during truck check. Any damage or mechanical problems shall be reported to a supervisor immediately who will remove it from service if necessary.

D. The proper use of ambulance stretchers shall include :

1. Ensuring there are enough personnel to safely move the patient
2. Keeping both hands on the cot frame, handles and straps supplied to assist with moving the cot at all times when moving a patient
3. Using required cot restraint straps at the patient's knees, hips, chest and over the shoulders.
4. Selecting lower or mid-range cot elevation positions when moving patients.
5. Selecting the lowest practical position of cot elevation when moving a heavy patient

E. Any accident involving a stretcher shall be reported to the Fire Chief immediately. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration "Medical Devices Report" and DPH/OEMS "Serious Incident and Accident Report" shall also be completed as required.