

Ambulance Design Standards EMS workers group

Introduction

Thanks for joining our group. My name is _____ and I'll be leading this discussion group today. We've planned for about an hour and a half discussion.

We're going to talk about ambulance design and features, safety issues, challenges you face and other related topics. Your input will be very important in providing us information needed to update design standards for ambulances.

Before we start, there are a few procedural items I want to mention.

Disclosure

- Audio taping/recording the discussion to make sure we are accurately capturing what everyone is saying
- Names will be held anonymous and will not be reported.
- Observers helping to listen/take notes.

Procedures

- No right or wrong answers; we want to hear your personal opinions.
- Please be open and feel free to express what you really think.
- We want to hear from everyone – so don't be shy.
- No need to raise your hand.
- One person talks at a time.

Background/Introductions

Gathering a basic idea about who the participants are for the focus group session is desirable, to include:

- Type of EMS workers (Volunteer/Career; EMT, Paramedic, Emergency Physician, etc.);

I would like to go around the room and have everyone tell us ...

- How long you have been an EMS worker (years)?
- Type of ambulance you use. Type I; Type I-AD (Additional Duty); Type II; Type III; Type III-AD (Additional Duty)
- What type of community do you serve – urban, suburban, rural?

Challenges

I'd like to start out by discussing what your biggest challenges are.

- What are the biggest challenges/frustrations you face in terms of maintaining your safety – both yours and that of your patients?
- How about challenges you face in treating patients within the ambulance's patient compartment?
- What are the ways that you and your fellow EMS workers have learned to overcome these challenges?
- What are the most valuable lessons you learned while working in EMS to ensure your and the patient's safety? How do these lessons keep you safe?

Design/Layout Features

- Please rate the current overall design/layout of ambulances on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- What do you feel are the most important aspects about the patient compartment design/layout to consider in supporting:
 - o EMS personnel performance and safety
 - o Patient safety
- What are your suggestions to improve your work environment in order for you to successfully and safely accomplish your tasks?
- I'd like to get your feedback on some specific features of the ambulance. What things do you think work? What would you change (and how) about the following?
 - o Seat design – bench/bucket. Which do you prefer and why?
 - o Orientation in patient compartment – on either side of patient compartment with side-wards facing seats placed to side of patient; in front of patient compartment with rearward facing seats looking overhead of the patient; front of patient compartment with forward-facing seats looking overhead of the patient
 - o Adaptability to two patients transport/or patient and friend/family member
- How does the current design enable or prevent the following?
 - o Reach/access to the patient
 - o Mobility/leg room with cot in patient compartment
 - o Administering oxygen/performing CPR and other tasks when restrained to sitting position.
 - o Other activities?

Restraint System/Seats

- Please rate the current restraint system of ambulances on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- How often do you wear the restraint system in the ambulance's patient compartment? Why?
- How about when dealing with a patient do you wear it then? Why?
- When do you find yourself removing your restraints to reach/access equipment or the patient? Please describe why.
- What changes would you like to see made to the restraint system? Why?
- What, if any, are the organizational policies or rules for seat belt usage in your district/county/state/EMS company? How do they help/hinder you in doing your job?
- What seats do you feel the most comfortable in? Why?

Injuries

- Please rate the current level of safety in ambulances as it relates to workers and patients on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- Who has suffered any injuries and/or near misses during their job? Please describe what happened. (If they personally have not be involved with an injury/near miss) How about your coworkers?
- For those of you who were injured, please describe how were you injured and what caused the injury.

- What things do you think could be done to prevent such an injury from occurring again?

Communications

- Please rate the communications features of ambulances on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- What communications are you involved in while working within the ambulance compartment? About what topics do you communicate?
- Who do you communicate with and how? Driver? Dispatcher? Medical facility? Others?
- What could be done to help improve communications within the ambulance compartment? What specific technologies could be used and how? (blue tooth, voice activation)
- How do you feel about the following communications features? Describe their usefulness to your job.
 - o Whiteboard for patient info
 - o Display of ambulance speed in the patient compartment
 - o Camera which can be seen from the driver compartment
 - o Video display in patient compartment of ambulance driver's view

Equipment

- Please rate the current suitability of equipment in ambulances as it relates to you doing your job on a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.
- How do you feel about the location of equipment/supplies/medicines? Are they located in a suitable place for you to do your job? Please explain.
- What equipment is most frequently used? Why?
- What equipment do you feel is the most important for treating patients? Why?
- Is this equipment easily accessible? Why or Why not?
- What equipment do you have on the ambulance that you find gets in the way because you don't use it? What equipment is simply never used? Why?
- What equipment do you wish you had on the ambulance that they currently do not have?
- Why would that equipment be valuable / what would having that equipment do for you?
- What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) do you frequently find yourself using? What is the most valuable PPE you have on the ambulance? What PPE do you have to carry but do not use?

ACSI

- How satisfied are you with the current effectiveness of safety standards as they apply to ambulance design? Please use a 10-point scale where '1' means 'very dissatisfied' and '10' means 'very satisfied'.
- To what extent does the current effectiveness of ambulance design safety standards meet your expectations? Please use a 10-point scale where '1' means 'falls short of your expectations' and '10' means 'exceeds your expectations'.
- Forget the current safety standards; now imagine what the ideal set of safety standards for ambulance design would be like. How well do the current standards compare to that ideal? Please use a 10-point scale where '1' means 'not very close to the ideal' and '10' means 'very close to the ideal'.

Closing

- Before we finish, I would like to give everyone an opportunity to share their final thoughts about our discussion and add anything that we may not have had the opportunity to address.

Thanks for your time. Your input will be very useful in helping DHS understand the issues you face and what can be done to address them in developing updated design standards.