

LONG DISTANCE TRANSPORT SAFETY

Long distance transports are a frequent occurrence in EMS and can pose a unique safety challenge. Numerous studies and articles have been published with guidelines for fatigue management; but, how do you manage the potential risk of a long-distance transfer even if the crew is well rested?

Implementing safety guidelines may increase awareness for both staff and leadership. This bulletin provides considerations to help ESOs manage the additional strain on crewmembers when tasked with a long distance transport and why it's important.

General Guidelines For Long Distance Transport Safety

- Select a crew that is well rested by evaluating shift start times, shift length, and volume of calls for each crew.
- Select a crew where multiple members are drivers and provide guidance for alternating drivers.
- Depending on how long the transport will be, consider sending more than 2 crew members/drivers.
- If the patient transport is one-way, require all crewmembers to remain awake throughout the duration of the transport (both patient loaded and non-patient loaded).
- Allow the driver to stop (if conditions permit) to reduce potential fatigue.
- Instruct crew member(s) to check on the driver routinely (every 15-20 minutes).
- Conduct communications center checks with the crew/driver every 30 minutes.

SUMMARY

There is not one simple solution to the potential challenges created by long distance transports. However, implementing safety guidelines for long distance patient transfers can help ESOs manage this increased exposure.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EMS.gov | [Fighting Fatigue in EMS](#)

National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) | [Fatigue in EMS Risk Management Guidelines Go Live](#)

VFIS | [Managing Fatigue in EMS Operations](#)