



MSDs for Ontario Paramedics

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Paramedic Musculoskeletal Disorders

- MSD Description for Paramedics:
Is the minor/major physical disabilities, associated with pain caused by an injury to the muscles, bones and joints. i.e. (neck, shoulders, wrists, back (Upper & Lower) hips, legs, knees, feet)
- Paramedics are susceptible to MSDs due to the weights/size and mechanics of equipment & unavoidable awkward lifting of patients.
- The most common MSDs for Paramedics are lower back, shoulder, knees, wrists.

Equipment Bags & Defibrillator/Monitor

- Lower back injuries were the leading cause of MSDs for Paramedics in the province due to sitting, lifting, bending, twisting and pulling and long periods of standing .
- Patient care equipment and bag sizes are on the increase both in size, and weights due to more delegated medical acts for Primary Care, and Advanced Care Paramedics.
- EMS Services in Ontario have various bags , both in size, and equipment carried beyond the MOHLTC Equipment Standards to provide the decisive patient care within our communities.
- Three common Defibrillators/Monitors used in Ontario are: Zoll, Phillips, Physio-Control.
- Defib/Monitor weights are from 10 to 15 kg depending on features.

Equipment Bags & Defibrillator/ Monitor

- Airway bag: 9 Kg
- Immobilization bag: 5 kg
- Trauma bag: 3.5 kg
- Red bag: 11kg
- Tank & regulator: 3.5 kg

Various services combine bags or have pouches or strapping capabilities on stretchers.

Paramedic

Musculoskeletal Disorders

- Implementation of new equipment (Hydraulic Stretcher and Power Lift) and stair chairs has had a positive effect on reducing MSDs for Paramedics across the province.
- Essex-Windsor EMS has reduced lower back injuries by 50% by changing the fleet over to the new stretcher, and power lifting device in the ambulance.
- Implementation of policies on lift assists and training on new equipment helps to reduce both the frequency of MSDs, and the extent of the injury.
- As Paramedics, we tend to overload our bags with equipment that is not necessary unless all calls were Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI's).

Paramedic Musculoskeletal Disorders

- Paramedics face many challenges that contribute to MSDs .
- EMS services have some preventable Policies & Procedures to reduce the possibility of injuries, some scenarios are outside our parameters, and injuries may occur.
i.e. Environmental, Patient size, Extrication, Urgency/CTAS Level, equipment, allied resources.
- Proper use of equipment with training and EMS Services purchasing more ergonomic equipment will reduce, and prevent injuries allowing Paramedics' careers to be extended to the age of retirement, with minimal pain, and full mobility.

Equipment

Stretchers & Stair Chairs



Equipment Stretchers & Stair Chairs



EMS

SEC. 21 Sub-Committee

- Sub-committee to the RNs
- Committee members are present from:

MOL Facilitator

SEIU

OPSEU

Unifor (CAW)

CUPE

Observers

4 Members from OAPC
(AMEMSO)

MOHLTC, PSHSA

- First Meeting was held on May 8th, 2008

EMS

SEC. 21 Sub-Committee

- Sec 21 Committee meets quarterly and develops Guidance Notes that are consistent with OHSA & Regulations.
- These Guidance Notes are created to promote “accepted practises” in EMS Services to encourage the H&S of Paramedics of the Province of Ontario.
- Guidance Notes should assist all EMS Employers, Supervisors, Paramedics, Support Staff & JHSCs in creating and meeting the minimal requirements of the Act.
- These documents, though not bounded, maybe used by an MOL Inspector to determine if every precaution reasonable is in place as required by Sec 25 (2) (h) of the OHSA.

EMS

SEC. 21 Sub-Committee

- There are currently 5 Guidance notes approved by the Minister:
 - #1) Application of EMS Guidance Notes
 - #2) EMS Vehicle Occupant Safety
 - #3) Reducing Diesel Exhaust in EMS Stations
 - #4) EMS Worker Exposure to Hazardous Drugs
 - #5) Traffic Safety and Worker Visibility

EMS

Sec. 21 Sub-Committee

- Currently 3 Guidance Notes in the approval stage with the Minister:

#6) Motor Vehicle Advance Technology Hazards

#7) Hazards Associated and Marijuana Grow
Operations

#8) Infection Prevention and Control Practises

EMS

SEC. 21 Sub-Committee

- Guidance Notes #9 and #10 in the draft process:
 - #9) Workplace Violence and Harassment
 - #10) MSD Prevention
- If you wish to review and get copies of the approved Guidance Notes please go the Public Services Health & Safety Association website. www.pshsa.ca.
- The PSHSA has a Paramedic Survey from the Sec. 21 Committee to be completed by Friday June 10th, 2016 which provides valuable feedback and is called:
Emergency Medical Services Section 21 Subcommittee Survey 2016

References:

- Google Images
- Sec. 21 Guidance Note #1 Application for EMS Guidance Notes
- Guidelines for Prevention of Back Injuries in Paramedics (OHCOW Inc., Sudbury Emergency Services/CUPE Local 4705)
- Essex-Windsor EMS: Chris Grant, Deputy Chief of Planning & Physical Resources.
Justin Lammers, Deputy Chief of Professional Standards.
- Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)