

GA-3 Disaster Medical Assistance Team

Safety Guide

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Safety Guide is to provide safety information to the members of the GA-3 Disaster Medical Assistance Team for their personal safety as well as guidelines for performing Team functions in a safe manner.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Review Site Safety Survey
2. Review Personnel Safety
3. Review Operational Safety
4. Review Accountability
5. Review Safety Officer Functions

REFERENCES:

1. GA-3 Disaster Medical Assistance Team Orientation Manual
2. GA-3 Disaster Medical Assistance Team By-Laws
3. Safety Officer, Major Duties and Responsibilities

INTRODUCTION:

Safety should be the concern of all personnel not just the Safety Officer. Everyone can and should take actions to correct anything that is unsafe by notifying the Team Leader, Safety Officer, and/or Commander. The following information will provide a guide for personal safety as well as performing Team functions in a safe manner.

Site Safety Survey

Before a Base of Operation (BoO) is established a Site Safety Survey is performed to identify any hazards. There are fixed hazards such as power lines, sewers, drains, and etc. There are also potential hazards such as runoff, wind, hazardous materials, contamination, and etc. It is important that these hazards be considered and adjustments made prior to committing personnel to work in this environment. A safe environment for personnel to operate within is the purpose of the "Site Safety Survey".

Personal Safety

Preparation:

Personnel should be prepared for their personal needs during deployments and/or activities. Beyond the general needs that everyone has there are specific needs for individuals such as medications, special equipment, personal preferences, needs based on the type and location of deployment, and etc.

Physical Ability:

Everyone should know their physical abilities and limitations. You should not perform any physical function that is beyond your ability. Working within your limitations will reduce or prevent the possibility of injuries. Everyone has different abilities and limitations. The type and location of a deployment can be a good indicator of the physical abilities required. Transportation, Base of Operation, functions, topography, and etc. can vary greatly for deployments and other activities. For your safety you must determine if you have the ability to meet the physical requirements for the deployment and/or activity. Do not perform any activities beyond your limitations.

Operational Safety

When a Base of Operation is established it should be designed so personnel can perform their duties in a safe manner for personnel and patients. A safe flow pattern should be established for the movement of patients that eliminates crisscross patterns, provides adequate spacing around equipment, separation between people walking and vehicle traffic. Consideration must be given to equipment staging, storage, and disposal of contaminated items to reduce the hazards to personnel and patients.

Accountability

Depending on the level of security and function, the type of accountability may vary. All personnel must always be accounted for. Everyone must report to someone, it could be a Driver, Team Leader, or etc. that person is responsible for the accountability of the members of their group. Depending on the type of situation the size of the group can vary from a small group such as a carpool to a Team assignment. The Team and Team Leader assignments usually follow the Chain of Command. The Commander must be able to account for all personnel at any given time. Team Leaders account for personnel in their group then report to the Commander. Situations may change rapidly and all personnel must be accounted for quickly.

Groups:

Groups are determined by the Commander base upon the situation. When transporting personnel someone in each vehicle should be accountable for the personnel in the vehicle. The Commander can then verify that all personnel are accounted for by contacting one person per vehicle. Teams can also be established that may vary in size and function.

Each Team should have a Team Leader that is responsible for the Team and reports accountability of the Team to the Commander.

Personnel Accountability Report (PAR):

A Personnel Accountability Report or “PAR” is given when all assigned personnel of a group are accounted for. This means that you can touch them. If you can not see them or touch them they are not accounted for. The Team Leader should know the location of all personnel assigned to their group. The Team Leader should be notified by a Team Member if they are going to be in a different location and when they return they should notify the Team Leader so they can be accounted for.

Safety Officer Functions

The Safety Officer should not be assigned any other task during the incident. The Safety Officer is responsible for the prevention and elimination of unsafe conditions, verifying the use of an accountability system, and should report directly to the Commander all safety concerns, except those that require immediate correction. Once the corrections are made, the Commander should be advised of the situation and actions taken.

Some situations may require more than one Safety Officer. When more than one Safety Officer is required the Assistant Safety Officer(s) should report to the Safety Officer who is responsible for overall safety.

CLOSING

Having a better understanding and awareness of safety will protect all personnel from possible injuries and reduce and/or eliminate unsafe conditions. Personnel can better prepare themselves for deployments and/or activities by knowing their abilities and limitations, improving their physical condition, and maintaining good health. Safety is the responsibility of everyone. The injury you prevent may be your own.