

SAFETY WATCH

Be Aware.

Bariatric Patients

According to the latest data published by the CDC in September 2015, more than 1/3 of the adult population is considered obese. Coupled with often other complex health conditions this growing patient population brings with it new challenges for the EMS provider.

Based on industry data and recent findings from event data being submitted to the PSO, the Center for Patient Safety is issuing a Safety Watch as these patients have been found to have an increased risk of:

- airway related events
- stretcher related events or other device failure-related events
- patient handling, including lifting and safely moving the patient
- medication mistakes

Some suggested safe practices include:

- Maintain the appropriate equipment and training for the bariatric patient.
- When moving a patient, ensure the appropriate number of personnel are present (at minimum 4 persons for patients weighing more than 300 pounds).
- Communicate with the receiving or destination hospital to ensure appropriate equipment and staffing are available for the transition of care. Consider an alternative destination or contingency plan if the primary receiving facility does not have the necessary equipment or staffing to provide the safe transition of care.
- Discuss this patient population with your medical director for specific needs, equipment or other requirements.

Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

<http://www.boundtreeuniversity.com/Patient-handling/articles/1320927-Managing-and-moving-the-very-large-EMS-patient>

http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/print/volume-165/issue-5/departments/fire-service_ems/treatment-transport-of-bariatric-patients.html

<http://www.emsworld.com/article/10654895/prehospital-bariatric-care>

For continued sharing and learning, visit www.centerforpatientsafety.org.

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PROTECTING.
LEARNING.
PREVENTING.

