



#### PURPOSE OF THIS NOTIFICATION

- Increase awareness of topic
- Provide actionable items to review and mitigate potential harm.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE

Paramedics, EMT's, EMS Providers

Nursing, Medical & other Clinical Leaders

Clinical Educators

Patient Safety/Quality Improvement Leaders

Legal/Risk Management

Organization Leaders in:

- EMS
- Hospitals
- LTC
- Home Care

#### NEXT STEPS

- Share this watch with the target audience
- Promote daily safety briefings
- Continue to share incidents, near misses and unsafe conditions with the Center for Patient Safety

#### CONTACT

##### PATIENT SAFETY DIRECTOR

Lee Varner, MSEMS, EMT-P, CPPS  
lvarner@centerforpatientsafety.org

The Center for Patient Safety is issuing this notification regarding:

## SAFETY WATCH: Respiratory Compromise



### BACKGROUND

- *Respiratory Compromise is a state in which there is a high likelihood of decompensation into respiratory insufficiency, respiratory failure or death, but in which specific interventions (enhanced monitoring and/or therapies) might prevent or mitigate decompensation.\**
- *Respiratory Compromise creates problems that are often serious and potentially life-threatening, but they are almost always preventable with the proper tools and approach. Appropriate patient monitoring and therapeutic strategies are necessary for early recognition, intervention and treatment.*
- Common themes include:
  - Lack of appropriate monitoring and early identification of respiratory compromise
  - Distractions, complacency or failure to identify high risk patients at transitions of care
  - Not anticipating respiratory complications or lack of situation awareness
  - Complications and risks from procedural sedation



### ACTIONS TO TAKE:

- Understand the pathophysiology and clinical factors of respiratory compromise
- Early identification of patients at risk
- Appropriate and timely patient monitoring
- Appropriate and prompt interventions and treatment



### RESOURCES

\*[Respiratory Compromise Institute](#)

*Thanks to Dr. Brian Froelke, CPS EMS Medical Advisor, for contributing to this Patient Safety Watch.*

#### MORE INFO

Contact us at 573.636.1014 or view this issue at [www.centerforpatientsafety.org/v5.1](http://www.centerforpatientsafety.org/v5.1)