



EMS Basics: The First 5 Minutes

For fire departments who offer both fire and EMS services, approximately 75-80% of all calls are medically-based. Not every fire department is fortunate enough to have EMT's or paramedics on their fire trucks. Regardless of your crew's level of medical training, there are several goals that **MUST** be accomplished within the first five minutes of patient contact. Accomplishing these goals will directly improve patient outcomes.



GOAL #1—PROTECT YOURSELF:

Wear proper PPE (gloves, etc.) and ensure that the scene is safe prior to entry.

GOAL #2—FOR CRITICAL PATIENTS, PERFORM IMMEDIATE INTERVENTIONS:

UNCONSCIOUS PATIENT = Open & protect airway

CARDIAC ARREST = Perform CPR

UNCONTROLLED BLEEDING = Direct pressure, bandage, elevate, & treat for shock

SEVERE SHORTNESS OF BREATH = Administer high-flow oxygen

GOAL #3—OBTAIN THE FOLLOWING:

Vital Signs = Blood Pressure, Pulse (rate/quality), Respiratory Rate, Lung Sounds, Blood Glucose, etc.

OPQRST/SAMPLE History of current illness (see right column)

GOAL #4—DOCUMENT PATIENT'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

Write down patient's name, date of birth, social security number, phone number, etc. This information will be very helpful for the incoming ambulance crew.

FOR THE OFFICER

- *Make sure that your crew knows your expectations and their roles PRIOR to the alarm.*
- *Continuously monitor your crew and the scene to ensure safety.*
- *For Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI's), delegate roles to your crew. Firefighter #1 can perform rapid triage, firefighter #2 initiates treatment to the most critical patients, and supplemental firefighters can perform support functions.*
- *Be proactive, not reactive. If you are in need of an air ambulance or multiple ground ambulances, request these resources sooner than later. You can always cancel them while they are en route if you decide that they are no longer needed.*
- *If the situation dictates, set up a specific staging area that allows for optimal ingress and egress of additional resources.*
- *On routine EMS alarms, use your time inside of a structure to familiarize yourself with the layout, construction features, and fire protection systems.*

OPQRST

ONSET-What was patient doing when the symptoms started?

PROVOKES/PALLIATES-Does anything make the pain worse/better?

QUALITY-Describe the pain (sharp, dull, throbbing, etc.).

RADIATES-Does the pain radiate somewhere else?

SEVERITY-On a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the worst pain, rate your pain level.

TIME-When did the symptoms start?



SAMPLE

SIGNS/SYMBOLS

ALLERGIES

MEDICATIONS

PREVIOUS MEDICAL HISTORY

LAST ORAL INTAKE

EVENTS LEADING UP TO ILLNESS

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