

Managing EMS Providers ...Herding Cats...

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Herding Cats



- The Mission
- Goals and Objectives
- Management
- Leadership
- Communication
- Discipline
- **Retention** and Recruitment

The EMS Mission

Objective...

- The purpose of the Organization

The Mission is to maintain a system capable of timely response to people in times of crisis, deliver quality prehospital medical treatment and evacuation of the sick and injured...

How To Move the Herd

The Goals... (as an example)

- To accomplish the mission, the agency:
 - ▶ Develop standards, policies and procedures pertaining to the provision of emergency medical services
 - ▶ Conduct medical and operational quality assurance
 - ▶ Manage a BLS and ALS ambulance service
 - ▶ Provide training, medical oversight and support services to maintain system equipment and personnel.

Dangerous Attitudes.....

"We're only volunteers, we do the best we can."

"We are 911! Who else you going to call."

"It's my district, and I am in charge, and we are the only game in town."

Is This Your Service?

Over 100 years of tradition....

....not impeded by a single day's progress!



Words *not* to live by....

- “We’ve always done it like that....”
- “That’ll never work here.....”
- “‘Cause I’m the boss - that’s why....”

Or...Is This?

team-work: the joint action by a group of people, in which individual interests are subordinate to the group’s unity and efficiency



Who are the EMS Providers?

- Passionate
- Independent
- Intrinsically motivated
- High energy
- Community minded
- Want to do the right thing
- Excitement junkies
- Need to be in charge of a situation
- Save lives
- Hard working
- **These are generalizations**

Who are the Customers ?

- The Patient
- The Patient's Family
- Taxpayers
- Managed Care Organizations/Insurance Companies
- Physicians, Nurses, Hospitals
- Health Care Organizations
 - ▶ *Region councils and medical advisory boards*
 - ▶ *State level health advisory bodies*
 - ▶ *Trauma council's, etc*
- Village and City Councils, Town Boards
- Police/Fire, Public Health Personnel
- Others ?????

Issues With Managing EMS Providers

- Passion Vs Rationality
- Understanding the EMS provider
- Training and education
- Policies and procedures
- Effective leadership
- Decision making skills
- Conflict resolution



Managers vs. Leaders

Management is about systems, controls, procedures, policies and structure

Leadership is about trust... about people

Portrait of a Long-Term EMS Captain



"Part of me has snapped and the other part is draggin!"

Managers

- Managerial goals tend to arise out of necessity - rather than desire and future plans
- A good manager does things right, a leader does the right thing.
- Managing is about efficiency, leadership is about effectiveness
- Management is about how... leadership is about what and why

Management

- The art or act of managing (*noun*)...
 - ▶ judicious use of means to accomplish an end...
 - ▶ executive ability...
 - ▶ ...those who manage or direct...
- To manage (*verb*)...
 - ▶ to direct or carry on business...
 - ▶ to treat with care...
 - ▶ to achieve ones purpose...



Managers

- Problem solver
“What problems have to be solved, and what are the best ways to achieve results so that people will continue to contribute to the organization”
- Deal with:
 - ▶ nuts and bolts
 - ▶ Logistics and planning
 - ▶ day to day operations

Managers

- Requires (but is not limited to) the following:
 - ▶ Organizational skills
 - ▶ Decision making abilities
 - ▶ Ability to delegation
 - ▶ Positive attitude
 - ▶ Respectful atmosphere
 - ▶ **Being generous with praise!!!**
 - ▶ Showing compassion for staff/members

Management Suggestions

- Needs to explain **WHY** something may be important or that things have to be done a certain way - rather than just ordering it done...
 - ▶ Protocols
 - ▶ Medical Control
 - ▶ Policies and Procedures
 - ▶ OSHA requirements
 - ▶ Public Health Law and/or rules and regulations.

Management Philosophy

- Encourage members/staff to think independently and creatively!
 - ▶ Allow crews to voice ideas.
 - ▶ Encourage members/staff to brainstorm together
 - ▶ Encourage team work
 - ▶ Implement new ideas
 - ▶ New ideas often work!!!



Management Wisdom

⇒ **IMPORTANT!!!**

- ▶ Deal with problems *promptly* and *consistently*
- ▶ Return phone calls and e-mail promptly
- ▶ Keep appropriate information confidential
- ▶ Have an open door policy and encourage its use
- ▶ Avoid letting staff become frustrated
- ▶ Minimize gossip
- ▶ Keep a constant eye on morale

Management Pearls

- Be prepared!!!
 - ▶ Be on time or be early! Time is valuable!
 - ▶ Have an agenda... and handouts, if appropriate.
 - ▶ Be organized, keep extraneous irrelevancies to a minimum.
 - ▶ Have answers and explanations ready.
 - ▶ Be willing to follow up or research answers...
 - ▶ Know what you're asking of the members and why you are asking it!

Leadership

- To Lead (*verb*) ... Webster's Dictionary
 - ▶ to guide the way;
 - ▶ to direct the operations or performance;
 - ▶ to tend toward a definite result;
 - ▶ a position at the front;
 - ▶ a principal role...

Leaders

- Characteristics of a good leader...
 - ▶ A visionary, a big picture thinker
 - ▶ A teacher
 - ▶ A communicator
 - ▶ Speaks in terms of "we", not "I"
 - ▶ Confident and hopeful
 - ▶ Trustworthy
 - ▶ Open minded
 - ▶ Caring

Leaders

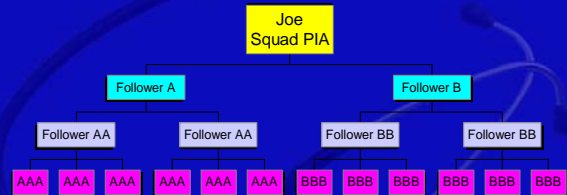
- stand up for their convictions
- speak with passion
- lead by example
- use power wisely
- master themselves
- are risk takers
- are not afraid to make decisions



Managers/Leaders

*Is this the same person
in your EMS agency?*

Group Morale



A "Herdable" Cat?



Policies & Procedures

- Policies and procedures serve several purposes... in descending order of importance!
 - ▶ To protect the organization
 - ▶ To protect the organization
 - ▶ To protect the organization
 - ▶ To establish a behavioral standard
 - ▶ To protect the provider and/or patient

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Expectations

- Attitude
- Behavior
- Performance
- Policies and procedures
- Other... (just a few examples)
 - ▶ Dress code
 - ▶ Hygiene



Working With The Herd

Communication...

- ...involves all of the senses. Anything a person hears, sees, feels or perceives all combine to make an impression...

Charly Miller, NREMT-P

The Art of Listening



- Concentrate
- Acknowledge
- Respond
- Empathize

The Art of Listening

- Active listening principals
 - ▶ Listening is a matter of choice
 - ▶ The listener must be committed to getting something out of the message
 - ▶ The listener must show concern for the speaker
 - ▶ The listener must be confident and assertive
 - ▶ 51% of the responsibility for good communications is on the listener

The Art of Listening

- Active listening skills
 - ▶ Concentrate on the message
 - ▶ Eliminate distractions
 - ▶ Ask questions to ensure understanding
 - ▶ Listen for an implied message
 - ▶ Be aware of non-verbal cues

Why is Communication SO Important?

- Developing new relationships require...
 - ▶ trust
 - ▶ sincerity
 - ▶ information exchange
 - ▶ conflict resolution/argument avoidance

Does Your Agency Have Discipline Problems ???



Two Phases of Discipline

- Prevention
- Action



Prevention Strategies

- **Policies and Procedures**
 - ▶ Staff know the rules
 - ▶ Signatures required
- **A solid job description**
 - ▶ Understand the level of commitment
 - ▶ Understand the tasks they are required to perform

Prevention Strategies

(continued)

- **A screening process**
 - ▶ Is the individual a good match for the job
 - ▶ What is their "history"???
- **Regular supervision and evaluation**
 - ▶ Where do they stand as it relates to the task(s) they have been performing?

Prevention Strategies

(continued)

- Recognizing and resolving conflicts and problems early!

Taking Action

- Actions are usually in response to one of two areas of concern:
 - ▶ **Performance Problems**
 - Quality of Work
 - Skills
 - Quantity of Work
 - Timeliness – Attendance - Availability
 - ▶ **Conduct Problems**
 - Behavior (Honesty, Sobriety, etc.)
 - Attitude (Respect, etc.)
 - Dependability

Is This A Performance Problem or a Conduct Problem?



Actions To Be Taken Must Be In Writing

- Behaviors that will not be tolerated under any circumstances (Result in immediate dismissal – By whom?)
- Actions that will result in warning and disciplinary procedures (By whom?)
- What that disciplinary procedure consists of

Your Agency Disciplinary Procedures should be in writing and applied equally to all personnel !

Disciplinary Procedure

Graduated Process

- Usually... moves from verbal warning - to written warning - to suspension - to dismissal
- Each step should involve a supervisory meeting
 - ▶ Performance problem is addressed & discussed
 - ▶ Outline plan for improvement
 - ▶ Thoughtful follow-up at designated intervals

Reprimanding

- **Don't smile**
 - ▶ This is a serious subject and smiling will only confuse the issue
 - ▶ Be serious and look serious
- **Deal with THE issue**
 - ▶ Don't save up a lot of small criticisms and drop them all at the same time
 - ▶ One issue

Reprimanding, continued

- **Be specific**
 - ▶ Talk about what the person is or is not doing and tell them how they should be doing it.
 - ▶ Avoid vague comments – particularly if they involve attitude or motivation as opposed to action or behavior
- **Let the person know how you feel**
 - ▶ Indicate that both you and the agency expect quality performance and that you are disappointed by unsatisfactory performance

Reprimanding, continued

- **Put the reprimand in perspective**
 - ▶ If the person has done good work in other areas or at other times, remind them of that good performance
- **Don't repeat the reprimand**
 - ▶ Cover what needs improvement – Make a plan – and then move on.
- **Follow the agency's disciplinary policy**

Reprimanding, continued

- It is important to consider the possibility that the reprimand will not solve your problem
- In case problems continue, it is important to begin developing a case history of the problem IN WRITING.



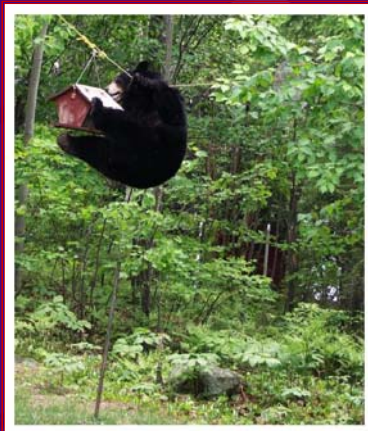
Reprimand – Documentation

- **Specific facts of the incident**
 - ▶ Dates & Parties involved
 - ▶ Specific nature of the misperformance
- **The date, time & nature of the conversation with the member/employee about the situation**
 - ▶ Include their own explanation of the reason for their performance

Reprimand – What Should Be Documented? (Continued)

- Any corrective actions that were identified with the person, including a timetable for their implementation
- Signatures

If Discipline Problems Continue...



What If Someone Has To be Fired? How Is It Done?

1. **Schedule a meeting with the person, in a private setting**
2. **Be prepared.**
 - ▶ The time for counsel is long past.
 - ▶ The person is not likely to be happy with anything you say – Script your comments
 - ▶ Stay on the task at hand

3. Involve another person in the room.

Another officer (preferably of the same sex as the person being terminated)

- ▶ This person does not have to say anything; Serves only as a witness to the situation

4. State the reasons for the termination and present them in writing

- ▶ Ask the person to sign the document indicating they understood what is being said

5. Focus comments on the performance – Avoid personal issues.

6. Discuss any recommendations for future work with the person. Are there any circumstances under which the person could come back to your agency?

7. Secure the return of any property, uniforms, keys, radios, ID cards, etc. Consider changing the combination to any coded locks

8. Escort the person from the premises following the meeting.

9. Do everything you can to stay calm. Say only what needs to be said and NOTHING MORE.

- It's easy to start talking excessively when nervous. This could lead to confusion, mixed messages or incorrect interpretations of your actions.

10. Document the meeting. Have your witness sign and date.

After The Firing...

• **Exercise damage control**

- ▶ Let the staff, friends/crew know that s/he was let go.
- ▶ Although you must protect confidentiality you also want to stem the tide of gossip and misinformation

• **Never provide a positive letter of reference for the fired person**



"You should check your e-mails more often. I fired you over three weeks ago."

Retention...

Maintaining Your People

- Understanding why they are there
- What motivates them
- Why they stay
- What **you** need to do to keep them
- What changes the **agency** needs to commit to



Retention...

- When someone leaves the agency,
ASK WHY!!!
 - What is the reason you are leaving?
 - What are your perspectives on the organization?
 - What can **we** do to keep you?
 - Is there anything that **we** could have done to have prevented your departure?

Recruitment

- Examine the community!
 - ▶ Can the community support recruitment?
 - ▶ Where are the recruits coming from?
 - ▶ How do you get people interested?
 - ▶ Who else is recruiting?



Recruitment

- Getting new people through the door...
 - ▶ job description
 - ▶ realistic portrayal of the job
 - ▶ job expectations
 - ▶ behavioral expectations

Recruitment

- Agency preparation
 - ◆ strong organization
 - ✓ good management
 - ✓ competent members/staff
 - ✓ good working environment
 - ◆ well respected in the community
 - ◆ quality service



Fresh Blood

- Who do you want to recruit?
- Do you have to take everyone?
- Is everybody “cut out” to be in EMS?
- Are all the recruits good for your agency?
- Can the agency turn people away?

Recruitment

- *What do we do with them now that they are here???*
 - ▶ Introduction to the members/staff
 - ▶ Familiarize them with the agency
 - ▶ Begin to education/training
 - ▶ Mentoring
 - ▶ “Eating our young...”

Can You Ever Really Herd Cats?

- *The process is always on going...*

- ▶ management
- ▶ organization
- ▶ communication
- ▶ growth... change... adjustment
- ▶ conflict resolution
- ▶ retention
- ▶ recruitment



In Conclusion...

- Satisfied staff/membership
- Operationally competent
- Forward thinking
- Plan ahead
- Well managed organization

**Quality Prehospital
Patient Care!**

CATS??? I Don't Think So!

- Thanks for listening!
- Strengthen your organization
- Provide a good EMS service!
- Have a great day!



Questions/Comments/Discussion

