

Falmouth Fire-EMS Operating Guideline Transporting Children Safely in Ambulances

Objective:

To establish a clear policy regarding EMS transports with child patients.

General Information:

Patients, including children must be secured in the safest manner possible in order to ensure that proper care is rendered. This policy established the guideline for such transports.

Guidelines:

A. Use of Child Safety Seat

1. When a pediatric patient is not required to be on a spine board or other immobilization device due to mechanism of injury concerns, a child safety seat is required for use on the ambulance stretcher.
2. The only approved seat to use by Falmouth Fire-EMS Department is a convertible seat.
3. This seat will be used to transport children and infants who are 5-40lbs in weight and 19-40" in height.
4. When using the seat on a stretcher, it must be mounted rear-facing.
5. The seat should be placed upon the stretcher with head reclined 45 degrees. The car seat must lie flat against the stretcher.
6. The seat must be secured to the stretcher using two pairs of belts. One belt should be attached to the stretcher backrest in a location that will not slide up or down and routed through the restraint belt path designated for "forward-facing" installation. The other should be attached rearward of the farthest side rail anchor and routed through the restraint belt path designated for "rear-facing" installation. Both belts should be tightened as much as possible so the car seat does not move more than one inch when pulled at the belt path.



*Note-Manufacturer's instructions do not specify installation on an ambulance stretcher. In a personal vehicle, only one belt path would be utilized depending upon whether the seat is used rear-facing or forward-facing. On the stretcher, the seat is always used rear-facing but BOTH belt paths are used. Additional details can be found at:

http://www.preventinjury.org/uploads/researchinfo/ResearchInfo_9.pdf

7. The child shall be secured by the harness within the seat at all times. Procedures should be performed around the harness straps. Ideally, the harness straps should be in the slots at or below the child's shoulders. The harness straps should be snug on the child, allowing for no slack. The harness retainer clip (plastic chest clip) must be positioned at the level of the child's armpits to prevent the harness straps from sliding off the child's shoulders in the event of a sudden stop or crash.
8. Blanket rolls may be used for extra stabilization around the patient but should not be placed under or behind the patient. Blankets or sheets may also be used over the patient to maintain temperature as long as the blanket or sheet is not between the patient and the harness.
9. The child seat should not be used in lieu of spinal immobilization.
10. Should a child not fit in the seat used by Falmouth, the child's own seat may be used as long as it is a convertible seat with two seat belt paths.

*Note-The only type of car seat recommended for installation on a stretcher is a convertible seat. It is the only type of seat that has two belt paths. If the child's own seat is a convertible seat and after considering #10 and #11 below, the seat can be used. Installing any other type of seat (including infant seats, combination seats or booster seats) would be improper and unsafe for the child, as there is no appropriate method for attaching the seat to the stretcher at two anchorage points. No other types of seats will be allowed for use as this increases risk of injury/death to the child and places the department at an increased risk of liability, as recommended procedures would not have been followed.

11. If the child's own convertible seat is used, it must be undamaged and clean from any debris that may injure the child.
12. Because of the above, it is unlikely that it would be advantageous to use the child's own seat if the child was being transported in a vehicle that was in a motor vehicle crash.
13. If in doubt of proper fit and installation when using a convertible car seat, a department Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician should be consulted if available.

B. Use of Ferno Pedi-Mate

1. If a convertible seat is unavailable, the Ferno Pedi-Mate should be used as the next best option of restraining an infant or a child on the stretcher.
2. The weight limit of the Ferno Pedi-Mate is 10–40 lbs.
3. The Ferno Pedi-Mate must be attached securely to the stretcher utilizing the upper black strap behind the stretcher and the lower black straps around the frame of the stretcher. The straps must be tightened as much as possible. The Ferno Pedi-Mate should be adjusted so that the harness straps are at the child's shoulder level.
4. The head portion of the stretcher should be adjusted as upright as medically tolerable and comfortable for the child.

5. The 5-point harness must be used and must be snug against the child with no slack. The harness retainer clip (plastic chest clip) must be positioned at the level of the child's armpits to prevent the harness straps from sliding off the child's shoulders in the event of a sudden stop or crash.
6. Blanket rolls may be placed around the patient for extra stabilization. Blankets or sheets may also be used over the patient to maintain temperature as long as the blanket or sheet is not between the patient and the harness.
7. If in doubt of proper fit and installation when using the Ferno Pedi-Mate, a department Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician should be consulted if available.

C. Spinal Immobilization

1. Children should be immobilized if the mechanism of injury warrants and spinal rule-out protocols are unable to be used.
2. In this instance, the child shall be immobilized using the Ferno Pedi-Pac device
3. The sizes of patients for this device are as follows: 28" to 54" tall, weighing 20 to 90 lb.
4. When securing the child to this board, all straps in the color-coded system will be used.
5. Should a child fall outside that range of sizes, a regular spine board will be used for immobilization. Towel and/or blanket rolls may be used to pad voids and secure the child to the board to minimize movement.
6. Pediatric c-collars will be used whenever a child is immobilized.

D. Larger Child Transportation

1. Children who exceed the weight or height limit of either the convertible car seat or the Ferno Pedi-Mate should be secured to the stretcher utilizing only the stretcher straps, using all of the straps, including the shoulder harness that has been properly fitted so that the latchplate and buckle are on the center of the sternum. This will prevent the straps from slipping off the child's shoulders, which could allow the child to be ejected off the cot. The head of the stretcher should be positioned as upright as possible.

Important Considerations:

A car seat involved in a collision may be compromised due to damage sustained in the collision as well as glass and other debris that may be in the seat. For this reason, it is encouraged that members use the Falmouth Fire-EMS car seat whenever possible.

Training:

All EMS personnel are expected to complete the course Transporting Children Safely in Ambulances presented through Maine EMS. The course will be offered every 2 years at Falmouth Fire-EMS.

These guidelines may be changed or altered by the Fire Chief at any time.