

Decontaminating the Ambulance

All of the supplies and tools needed to clean the ambulances have been placed in the North Bay. There is a red Rubbermaid caddy that contains: 2 bottles of **Disinfectant**, 2 bottles of Cleaner/Degreaser, 2 bottles of Glass Cleaner, and several Shop Towels. There is also 1 yellow mop bucket, mops, and brooms designated for decontamination. All of the supplies needed to restock these caddies are located in the Laundry Room. **Remember to only use the clean shop towels located on the decontamination cart or out of the yellow bin and not the clean white bath towels located on the shelves with the sheets.**

Exterior:

- Pull the ambulance out of the bay and leave it running. **Make sure to apply the parking brake.** The parking brake must be applied for the high idle to cut on. The high-idle feature monitors battery voltage and supplies the necessary power to run the electrical accessories and change the batteries if needed. It is not good for the truck to remain idling for extended periods (>10 minutes) without the high-idle feature engaged.
- Check all the exterior lighting. Turn on the emergency lights, scene lights, and the headlights. Do a quick walk-around to make sure that all of the lights are working. Check headlights on high-beam and turn signals, front and rear. Be sure the siren is also operational. Document any problems in the *Defective Apparatus Log* located over the downstairs computer.
- Clean all of the exterior mirrors and windows. The windshield should be free of bugs and other debris. If it is excessively dirty, then the truck probably needs to be washed. Clean the side-view mirrors of any dirt or grime.
- Exterior paint should be clean. Wipe your finger over the lower half of the truck; if you leave a streak, or your finger is dirty, the truck needs to be washed.
- Tires should be free of mud. If they need to be cleaned, spray the Cleaner/Degreaser on the tires, scrub, and then spray off. This should be done every time the truck is washed.

Cab:

- Wipe down the dashboard and console with disinfectant. This is best accomplished by spraying the disinfectant on the towel first and then wiping. **Do Not Spray the Disinfectant Directly onto the Dashboard, Console, Radio, or Any Other Electrical Equipment.** The dashboard and console should be dust free.
- Disinfect the steering wheel, door handles, and radio microphone. These areas need special attention due to the amount of use they get. Think about how many different people use the radio, get in the truck with their gloves on, or fail to wash their hands after each call.
- Clean all of the interior mirrors and windows. There are boxes of paper towels in the North Bay to be used with the glass cleaner. Wipe down the interior of the side windows, windshield, and clean the rearview mirror.
- Ensure that the necessary map books and the clipboard are in the truck. They should be secured in the map bin (if the truck has one) or stacked neatly on the

- floor. Make sure that the clipboard has call sheets, and that there is a portable radio in the truck (check to make sure it is charging and operational).
- Vacuum out the interior (floor and seats) and clean up any loose trash. There should not be any used gloves, soda cans, or trash in the cab, between the seats, or in the door pockets. The floorboards that are not carpeted may be wiped out with the Cleaner/Degreaser if necessary. **Do not use Cleaner/Degreaser on carpets!**
 - Make sure that the fuel gauge is above $\frac{3}{4}$ of a tank. If not, fill it up prior to putting it back in the bay.

Patient Compartment:

- Remove the cot from the truck and wipe down all of the stretcher rails and handles. These cots are used on multiple patients everyday and we all know what types of fluids the cots are routinely exposed to. At least once a shift, remove and discard the sheets from the cot. Remove the mattress from the frame and clean entire mattress with disinfectant. Wipe down the frame of the cot making sure to check the undercarriage.
- Check that all of the interior lights work appropriately. Again, note any problems in the *Defective Apparatus Log* located over the downstairs computer. It can't get fixed if no one knows that it's broken.
- Disinfect all of the interior surfaces. **Disinfectant should NOT be sprayed on any surface and left to dry completely.** If you have transported a patient with isolation precautions, **wet down contaminated surfaces and allow it to soak for several minutes but DO NOT let disinfectant dry.** Remember to spray off door handles, the action area, and radios. **Remember, DO NOT spray disinfectant directly onto any electronic parts.**
- Wipe down all of the interior door handles, and the handles for the cabinets. If you are debating what needs to be disinfected, think about what your gloved hand, or the patients routinely touch. These things should all be wiped down.
- Clean the Plexiglas cabinets with Glass Cleaner, not disinfectant.
- Put away all loose equipment and linens. This includes extra tape rolls and boxes of gloves in the action area. Any object that isn't secured will become a projectile in the event of an accident. There are numerous cases in which attendants have been killed by flying equipment (the jump bag should be placed in the compartment above the drug box compartment or secured to the cot or the bench seat with seat belts).
- Check the sharps containers and trash cans to make sure that they are not filled to capacity. If the sharps container is almost full, make sure to change it out on your next trip to the hospital. There should be spare empty containers located in the supply room. Like other supplies, if they are not readily available in the supply room, leave a note on the white board.
- Sweep and decontaminate the floor. After sweeping, spray the floor with disinfectant. Let it sit for a few minutes, and then mop the floor with clean water. Let the floor dry before putting the cot back in.

Equipment:

Although it is not specifically stated on the checklist, there are numerous other times that need to be decontaminated on a regular basis.

- Monitor/Defibrillator: Wipe down the lead cables, the pulse ox probe, and the face of the monitor.
- Oxygen caddy: Clean out the interior of the caddy, and wipe down the regulator.
- Immobilization Equipment: The backboards and head blocks need to be wiped down on a regular basis. When picking up or restocking immobilization equipment from the hospital, make sure that it is clean before placing it back on the ambulance. You would be surprised how many of the backboards have dried blood inside the grab rails. There are bottles of disinfectant and extra towels in the UVA EMS Room designated for this purpose (this applies to the KED's and the Pedi-immobilizers as well).
- Stethoscope and Blood Pressure Cuff. These items get used on every patient and rarely get cleaned. Wipe down the stethoscope (ear pieces and bell) and lightly spray the surface of the BP cuff if necessary. Make sure that the BP cuff is dry before placing it back in the jump bag.
- If you have any questions as to what need to be cleaned, think about what items routinely come into contact with the patients, or your gloved hands. Use the disinfectant and towels at the hospitals to clean the equipment and the truck as it is used.

At first glance it may seem like this whole process could take an hour or more to complete. A crew of 2 or more, familiar with the checklist and the equipment on the unit, can complete this in 20 minutes or less. Once the program is up and running, the trucks should stay fairly clean and stocked appropriately. **Remember you must replace any equipment used during the shift.** Checking and cleaning the truck should be a team effort. Take some pride in the unit that you are using, you will be responsible for its condition at the end of your shift.

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