

Communication
Crisis

1989 Ambulance
Manufacturers
Directory

July 1989 Volume 11 Number 7 \$3.00

jems
JOURNAL OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Your Fleet Can
Live Longer

Altered
Mental States

NO VACANCY



Ambulance Diversions:

All Packaged Up And
Nowhere To Go

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- Vehicle Life and Performance: You're in the Driver's Seat** 34
by Donald Dodson, MBA

Even though ambulances are crucial life-saving tools, many EMS systems fail to prepare emergency vehicle operators to properly operate and maintain them.

- Dangerous Detours: Ambulance Diversions Stall Patient Delivery** 42

by Marion Angell Garza

Paramedics and EMTs nationwide are facing roadblocks to quality care as ambulances are diverted from overcrowded ERs to less impacted hospitals, sometimes miles away. The consequences can be serious.

- Is EMS Communicating with the FCC?** 50

by Mark Johnson, et al

Radio communication problems in EMS run the spectrum from annoying to deadly. Dedicated radio frequencies for EMS, much like those exclusive to police and fire departments, are long overdue.

- Dispelling Myths on Ambulance Accidents** 60

by Robert Elling, NREMT-P

That ambulance accidents are a serious problem is no myth. But they can be avoided by understanding the variables involved and correcting high-risk behavior.

- Altered Mental States—Grappling with the Unknown (CEU Article)** 66

by David Baehren, MD, and Howard Werman, MD

Determining the cause of altered mental status and the appropriate treatment can turn an EMT into a detective. But a systematic approach to such a patient can solve the diagnostic mystery and help prevent morbidity.

- 1989 Ambulance Manufacturers Directory** 76

by Charles Toporek

This list of 37 companies will help make sense of the rapidly changing and expanding ambulance manufacturing industry.

COLUMNS

- Guest Comment** 5

by William Brown and Randel Ross

Isn't All Maintenance Preventive Maintenance?

- The Publisher's Page** 6

by Jim Page

When EMS Was Lighting Bolts and Frenzy

- Guest Comment** 8

by Peter Beekman, JD, EMT-A, and Allen Fankhauser, JD, EMT-D

COBRA Can Bite

- Current Research** 27

by Bruce Goldfarb

- Tricks of the Trade** 33

by Thom Dick

Simple Stuff: When Does Rescue Become Art?

- Innovations** 79

by Thom Dick

Pedi-Board: LSP's New Pediatric Immobilizer is Best Yet

- Teacher Talk** 81

by Susan Clark, BS, EMT

When Good EMT Students Can't Pass the Written

- QA Forum** 89

by Jim Dernocoeur and Thom Dick

Where Does the Money Come From? Up-Front Financing for Quality Assurance

- The Legal File** 91

by Carol J. Shanaberger

Making the Grade

- Pediatric Notebook** 94

by James Everidge, Brent Dierking and Mary Ann Talley

Achieving Success in Pediatric IV Therapy

- In the Industry** 112

by Rick MinerD

DEPARTMENTS

- Letters** 12

- Inside EMS** 19

- Calendar** 88

- Classifieds** 106

- Inroads** 110

- Advertiser Directory** 113

- The Last Word** 114

Cover: Zephyr Pictures/Kevin L. Cruff

Introducing the original **EMT
FIELD GUIDE**

Field-tested for 5 years, the 6th Edition of this popular pocket guide includes the following features:



- * Pocket-sized - only 3" x 5"
- * Waterproof - (It floats!)
- * Durable, laminated pages
- * Quick, easy index
- * 800 Prescription Drugs
- * 35 Emergency Medications
- * ACLS Algorithms
- * Champion Trauma Scale
- * Glasgow Coma Scale
- * Pediatric drug charts
- * Metric conversions
- * APGAR, Burn Charts, MCI, EKG rulers & more!

*** Unconditional Money-Back Guarantee***

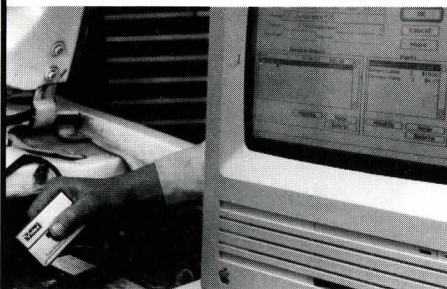
To order, send form to: Creative Ventures Inc, P.O. Box 1001, Lake Oswego, OR 97034
Phone: (503) 223-6381

YES, send me _____ Name _____ Jems 7/89
EMT Field Guides @ \$11.50. Address _____
TOTAL \$ _____ City _____
[10% discount on 20 or more] State _____ Zip _____

For More Information Circle #11 on Reader Service Card

A New Tool.

MacWrench™ is a complete, fleet maintenance software system designed to simplify service/repair scheduling, parts and inventory tracking, and cost reporting. It runs on Macintosh computers, so it's very easy to use. In fact, mechanics can enter most service/repair data without a



keyboard—using an optional bar code reader.

MacWrench is a time-saving new tool for any organization with a fleet of vehicles. Call American TriTech for more information today.



AMERICAN
TRITECH

3663 Jewell Street, 619/272-2700
San Diego, California 92109

For More Information Circle #12 on Reader Service Card

Jems

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
James O. Page

Publisher and Executive Editor
Keith Griffiths

Senior Editor
Nancy Peterson

Medical Editor
Cleve Trimble, MD

Associate Editors
Thom Dick

Marion Garza
Diane Lofshult

Lee A. Reeder III

Editorial Assistant
Rhonda Foster

CEU Program Coordinator
Twink Gorgen, RN

Contributing Editors
Betty Till, RN; Norm Dinerman, MD;
Mike Frank, MD; Gary Morris; Mary Newman;
William Roush, MD; Garry Bries;
Ken Stults; and Bruce Goldfarb

Art Director
Robert Schmitt

Production Manager
Dana Jarvis Bies

Graphic Artist
Kathy Bush

Associate Publisher/Sales
Rick Miner

Advertising Director
Lisa J. Cota

Account Executives
Martin R. Lipp
Marte Reavis

Advertising Coordinator
Janene Long

Corporate Controller
Marilyn Bock

Corporate Accounting Manager
Garth M. Howe

Assistant Accounting Manager
Tracey Smith

Circulation/Marketing Director
Jay W. Hillis

Circulation Fulfillment Manager
Stephen W. Phillips

Director of Conference Operations
Betty Till

Assistant Conference Planner
Tamara McConnell

Executive Assistant
Pamela Birnbrauer

Customer Service Manager
Terri Maddox

Customer Service Representative
Shanon Wolper

Administrative Assistant
Chuck Toporek

Receptionist/Administrative Assistant
Kelly Kenney

Jems Publishing Company, Inc.
President

James O. Page
Secretary/Treasurer

Keith Griffiths
Vice President

Betty Till
Advertising Intern

Evan Weisenfeld

JEMS, Journal of Emergency Medical Services, ISSN 0197-2510, is published monthly by JEMS Publishing Co., 674 Via de la Valle, Suite 200, P.O. Box 1026, Solana Beach, CA 92075; 619/481-1128 (Fed. ID #22-2357324).

Subscription information: Send \$19.97 for one year (12 issues), \$33.97 for two years (24 issues) or \$44.97 for three years (36 issues) to P.O. Box 27966, San Diego, CA 92128. Add \$10 per year for Canadian subscriptions, \$20 per year for foreign subscriptions. For new orders only, call toll free 1-800/334-8152 (in Calif. call 1-800/255-3302).

Advertising information: Rates are available upon request. Contact JEMS Advertising Department at 674 Via de la Valle, Suite 200, P.O. Box 1026, Solana Beach, CA 92075; 619/481-1128.

Editorial information: Manuscripts and queries should be directed to Nancy Peterson, P.O. Box 1026, Solana Beach, CA 92075. Editorial guidelines are available upon request. Submitted manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced and submitted in quadruplicate.

Microfiche: JEMS is available on microfiche. Please direct inquiries to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 800/521-3044.

Copyright 1989 Jems Publishing Co., Inc. No material can be reproduced without the express permission of the publisher.

Postmaster: Send address changes to JEMS, P.O. Box 27966, San Diego, CA 92128-9959. Claims of non-receipt or damaged issues must be filed within three months of cover date. Second-class circulation postage paid at Solana Beach, California and at additional mailing offices.

BPA membership applied for November 1988.