



# 5-minute safety talk

## Scene Safety

Forgetting scene safety fundamentals can put lives at risk. It's imperative to form good habits during training. The following information will help you meet the challenges of your next extraction.

### Work Within the IC System

Extrication scenes are complex and chaotic. Check with the Incident Commander to determine your assignment, what hazards are present, and the number of victims trapped.

### Stabilize First

Vehicles must be stabilized (with cribbing or tied off) prior to beginning work in and around them. If additional personnel are available, have them monitor tie-off points to prevent people from walking into ropes, cables, or chains. Stay away from the downhill side of a vehicle in an awkward position or on a slope; stabilization could fail and you would be in the car's path.

### Wear Personal Protective Equipment

You need to protect yourself from gasoline, hot mufflers, glass, and more. Wearing the proper PPE is a must. In fact, NFPA 1670 mandates anyone in a hot zone wear the proper PPE.

### Watch for Downed Lines

Every vehicle accident has the potential for downed lines. Scan the scene prior to exiting your unit. If you observe a downed line, park your unit at least one power pole length away. Stop traffic from entering the area. Always consider downed lines energized until the utility company confirms the line has been neutralized.

### Control the Scene

Establishing a hot zone early and barricading the area with tape prevents unauthorized persons from entering. EMS professionals without proper PPE need to remain outside the hot zone.

### Minimize Vehicle Hazards

Disconnecting the vehicle's electrical system is important if the air bags haven't deployed. If this step isn't taken and the bag activates, emergency personnel can sustain serious injuries. Turn the vehicle off and remove the key. Don't delay extrication if an air bag hasn't deployed. Inform those working in the area that the air bag hasn't activated, and make sure all workers are clear of the strike zone should it deploy.

When disconnecting the battery, proper PPE is a must. The negative side of the battery should be disconnected first. Disconnect and tape both terminals whenever possible to prevent them from coming into contact with metal or a power source.

### Danger Under the Hood

Wear full PPE when accessing the engine compartment to protect against fuel, fumes, battery acid, and more. Practice access techniques. Dark environments are especially challenging. Lighting the scene early will help you work more efficiently and provide better care to patients.

### Prepare & Transport

During extrication, have available personnel set up equipment, supplies, and vehicles to be ready for the patient. This may involve helicopter assistance. Adjusting extrication collars, splints, or immobilization devices is important, but shouldn't delay departure. Most adjustments can be made while en route. The quicker the patient arrives at a hospital, the better the chance of survival.

### Keep Victims Warm

Shock victims become cold easily. During extraction, keep the victim warm by using protective tarps, wind breaks, portable heaters, etc. Have a blanket ready once extraction is complete.

### Remember the Details

Make a mental note of where each patient was, their vehicle, and where the vehicles were damaged. Communicate that information to the hospital physician.

Remembering these fundamentals can help you provide the best quality care to your patients and ensure a safe scene for your fellow rescuers.

Visit [nsc.org/members](http://nsc.org/members)  
for more safety tips

