

Scene Set-Up

You are on-scene with multiple cars and multiple patients. The state patrol and sheriff's department have already arrived. Multiple fire trucks, ambulances, helicopters, and first responder vehicles are either there or responding. Let's not forget about civilian vehicles, on-lookers, and well-meaning Good Samaritans. Does this sound like chaos to you? It can easily turn into just that, but with a few simple steps and a minute of planning, it doesn't have to occur. Scene set-up and a dedicated Incident Commander, no matter how big or small the scene, are crucial to keeping us all working together smoothly and seamlessly. Let's talk about some of the things to think about.

Number of patients – Is there one patient or multiple patients? Are you going to need additional ambulances or helicopters to transport everyone on scene? Establish a dedicated staging or “parking” area to help keep transport routes open.

Time, length, and extent of extrication – Keep *extrication* in mind when you're setting up your scene/incident command locations. If you have patients who will need extensive extrication or if there are multiple patients to be extricated, then the patients will be ready for transport at varying times. Make sure that once all of the rescue vehicles are staged, they will be able to get back out when their patients are ready for transport. Also, if major extrication is needed after staging has begun, will you need additional rescue personnel to help? Will they be able to get safely into the scene?

Routes of incoming and outgoing resources – Is there a safe avenue to enter and exit the scene? If possible, have an entrance route and an exit route to minimize congestion.

Access to hospitals – Think about where the hospital is in regards to your scene. This is the access avenue that you want to ensure remains open. Do not park rescue vehicles or land helicopters in the direct exit path to the hospital.

Landing a helicopter – A landing zone (LZ) with easy access to the patient is ideal, but do not let the helicopter become an obstruction either. Sometimes landing on the highway is not ideal for this reason – the helicopter has now blocked access to the scene for additional personnel to enter or exit. Also, think about if there is a possibility of needing multiple helicopters. An LZ may need to be set up off to the side to ensure that there is plenty of room for maneuvering while landing and taking off.

Communication - This is the most important part of any scene set-up! Have a dedicated Incident Commander who can see the ENTIRE scene and is not sitting in the middle of it. It is his or her responsibility to direct incoming and outgoing traffic to the proper spot. Having one person handle this aspect helps to eliminate the confusion that can happen when multiple people are giving directions.

Remember two main concepts:

1. **Clear, concise communication is vital! Let one person handle Communication to lessen confusion.**
2. **Keep an open route to the hospital! Don't inadvertently create another obstacle by parking or landing rescue vehicles in this route.**

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