

Protecting Portable Equipment

Emergency Service Organizations (ESOs) depend on a broad range of portable equipment to accomplish their mission of public safety. Portable equipment may include rescue-related equipment, communications equipment, training videos, mannequins, and even trailers that are used to transport portable equipment.

Portable equipment has evolved to provide Fire and EMS agencies tools that are not only convenient but critical to all phases of operation. On scene use of this equipment makes it susceptible to damage or total loss. Repair or replacement of modern portable equipment can become costly to the ESO and affect normal operations. Consider the following best practices to protect and secure your portable equipment.

Damage or loss of portable equipment can be mitigated by using different risk control methods that are simple and effective.

- Secure the equipment to the individual user:
 - Lanyard clips, straps, radio cases, etc.
- Strictly follow the manufacturers recommendations for use and cleaning:
 - Make decontamination a priority once you return to the station
 - If decontamination is not possible or feasible, contact a professional cleaning service sooner rather than later
 - Evaluate the type of incident before you arrive and decide if the equipment is needed to control or assist with the emergency; if not, leave it on the emergency vehicle
- Perform routine (daily), pre- and post-incident inspections of all portable equipment
- Complete the manufacturer's recommended service requirements
- Consider appointing a staff member as a portable equipment officer
 - Designate a member on scene, if possible, to account for all portable equipment being used. This member also can check for its safe return during incident clean up or departure.
- Organizational Culture Change:
 - Stress the proper use, operational importance and replacement cost of the portable equipment to all members
 - Emphasize to all members that portable equipment is not disposable equipment
 - Support the use of portable equipment Standard Operating Guidelines to ensure that it is used correctly

Portable equipment is an important part of every ESO and with adequate attention to protect, clean and maintain these items we can better serve the public and accomplish our daily mission.

For more information on this topic, please consult with your VFIS Regional Director, Broker or Insurance Agent. Additional resources can also be found by listening to our VFIS [Don't Risk It!](#) podcast available wherever you receive streaming information.