

Telecommunicator of the Year 2009
Kristin DeLoach

On July 15, 2008, in the late afternoon, just prior to the end of her shift, Kristin DeLoach answered a wireless call from an extremely agitated woman who said her brother had just been bitten on the foot by a rattlesnake. When Kristin asked her for her location, the caller became extremely anxious and very confused. While constantly reassuring the woman that help was on the way, Kristin continued to probe for information concerning the call's location. The woman was understandable frantic. After several attempts to calm and focus the caller, Kristen finally got the woman to ask the snakebite victim for his address and relay it back to her.

Upon finding out the county road address, Kristen realized the location of the incident was only half a mile from the southernmost county line. The snakebite victim was as far away from help as possible while still being within her jurisdiction!

As Kristen began her initial patient assessment by questioning the caller, the sister volunteered information about her brother's "bad" heart and asked EMS to hurry. Kristen reassured her two EMS units were on route to her location and the local helicopter service had been notified. Despite Kristen's repeated attempts to reassure and calm the sister, she became even more distraught and frantic. Wanting to keep the sister calm, in order to keep the patient calm, Kristin asked the caller to put the patient himself on the phone.

Once on the phone with the snakebite victim, Kristin quickly gathered all the necessary information needed for the EMS crews to find their location and began to assess the patient directly.

From the description of the pain and swelling, it quickly became evident she was dealing with a "wet" bite from the rattlesnake. The patient complained of intense pain at the site of the wound and swelling encompassing both his foot and ankle. Realizing time was of the essence, Kristin requested her call-taking partner contact the helicopter service and ask them to launch the aircraft. The field crews requested the flight service bring the CroFab anti-venom to administer to the patient.

Kristin talked the patient through the initial care issues, such as having him sit in the car's front seat and keep his affected foot below the frame of the car, allowing gravity to work in his favor. She helped him keep a slow and steady heart rate by staying calm and knowledgeable on the phone. She advised him to stop moving. Understanding his pain level was increasing with

every moment, she attempted to explain that movement caused toxins to flow more quickly through his bloodstream. She kept him on the phone until the first responding unit arrived, ten minutes after the initial call for help.

Upon the helicopter's arrival, the ground unit had the patient packaged for flight and the first vial of CroFab was administered quickly. According to the state of Texas, this call set a time record for the administration of CroFab in a field setting. We were very proud to see this patient, two weeks later, walking out of the hospital on his own two feet!

In addition to being the call taker responsible for getting the correct address to the dispatcher, Kristin did an excellent job in setting up landing zone information for the helicopter, patching together the channels need to talk to our EMS crews on the scene, and giving pertinent pre-arrival instructions to the patient. Only one week prior to this incident, Kristin received a 9-1-1 call involving a bull snake bite victim. Afterwards, she was able to discuss the differences in handling the two events with fellow dispatchers. In addition to saving a life, it proved to be an excellent teaching opportunity!

It is because of the qualities displayed during her handling of this event and the effort and commitment she displays daily, that I nominate Kristin DeLoach as a Telecommunicator of the Year for 2009.