The First 60 Seconds on Scene

Dispatch is a guess. Your size-up is the plan.

THE SITUATION

You pull up to a call that sounds simple. Dispatch information is often incomplete, sometimes wrong, and rarely tells you who else is there or what changed in the last few minutes.

WHAT GOES WRONG

- Tunnel vision on the patient while the scene is still unsafe.
- Parking where you cannot leave, or where you block the next unit.
- No extra resources requested until the call is already failing.
- Roles are never assigned, so everyone does the same task.

DO THIS, IN ORDER

1. **Listen and look on approach:** crowds, raised voices, weapons, smells, sounds, traffic, utilities.
2. **Position the unit:** room to leave, uphill and upwind when you can, do not block incoming units.
3. **360 as you step out:** "What did dispatch not tell me?"
4. **Give a short size-up on the radio** (see below).
5. **Request resources now.** It is easier to cancel help than to wait for it.
6. **Assign roles** before you touch the patient: who has the patient, who has the history, who manages bystanders.
7. **Set an exit trigger:** "If X happens, we back out."

SCENE CHECKLIST

Look for	Ask yourself
Hazards: fire, fumes, traffic, wires, unstable structure	Can I work here safely?
Weapons, intoxicated or angry people, animals	Do I need law enforcement first?
Number of patients and mechanism	Do I need more units now?
Access and exit	Can I get the stretcher in and out?
Bystanders and family	Who can help, and who is a risk?

SAY THIS (RADIO SIZE-UP)

"Medic 12 on scene. Two patients, one adult in the driveway, one inside. Scene is not yet secure, a large crowd and one person yelling. Requesting law enforcement and a second ambulance. Staging at the corner until the scene is cleared."

PITFALLS

Walking in because "it sounded minor" • a partner who goes in alone • waiting to ask for help until you are overwhelmed • arriving first and entering an unsecured violent scene.

2-MINUTE DRILL

Dispatched for a "person down" outside a bar at 0200, crowd of about 20. What three things before you exit the unit?

Answer: Position and staging with an exit, whether law enforcement is on scene or on the way, and who does what once you approach.

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