Objective: Effective communication is essential for promotion of safe patient care in Emergency Departments (EDs). Miscommunication during hand-off between healthcare providers results in increased risk of negative patient outcomes. IPASS (I=Illness severity; P=Patient Summary; A=Action List; S=Situational Awareness and Contingency Plan; S=Summary) is a hand-off tool currently utilized in many healthcare institutions as a structured hand-off mnemonic to organize patient needs when sent from one provider to another. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of IPASS between EMS personnel and receiving triage ED nurses at Maimonides Medical Center.

Methods: A 10 question survey was self-administered at pre and post IPASS implementation. Each question had a score of 0-6 with 0 being strongly disagree and 6 being strongly agree. IPASS implementation included the dispersal of lecture, huddle and email about IPASS to providers and an 8-week period of IPASS use between EMS personnel and ED triage nurses. IPASS was utilized as a handoff tool between EMS personnel and ED triage nurses in the triage areas of the ED. Data analyses included independent sample t-test, chi-square, and linear regression.

Results: 76 providers (34 RNs and 42 EMS personnel) completed the pre-survey and 72 providers (40 RNs and 32 EMS personnel) completed the post-survey. A statistically significant mean positive response was found at post-survey for 5 questions: Current handoff procedure in ambulance triage is clear and consistent, 3.51 (±1.5) vs. 4.03 (±1.5) P<.05; Current handoff practice is standardized and follows a formal procedure, 3.30 (±1.7) vs. 4.06 (±1.6), P<.01; Information during handoff is clear and consistent, you understand the reason for the patient visit, 4.0 (±1.3) vs. 4.6 (±1.2), P<.01; Current handoff procedure translates patient needs consistently, 3.86 (±1.4) vs. 4.32 (±1.4), P<.05; You will use this handoff procedure throughout patient care transfers, 4.61 (±1.4) vs. 5.36 (±0.8), P<.0001. The results were consistent after controlling for gender, years of experience, and provider roles.

Conclusion: ED nurses and EMS personnel gave positive feedback using IPASS as a handoff tool. The providers intend to utilize IPASS in this setting, minimizing information loss and improving patient safety.