

The Southwest Ambulance Bariatric Care Unit



Arizona-based Southwest Ambulance has introduced three Bariatric Care Units as a new resource in the transportation of the obese patient. There are only about a dozen such units in the country.

Our in-house Fleet Department created the design and made the extensive modifications to protect the patient and crew from injury.

This presentation is to introduce you to the modifications and provide you with an overall understanding of the ambulance.

The Bariatric Unit is built on the Ford E350 Chassis and is considered a Type 3 Ambulance with a strong suspension and shocks.



**Our first modification
was an air ride
suspension.**

**Think of it as airbags
near the back tires...**



...that allows the rear of the vehicle to drop approximately 8 inches in the rear.



**We built a new floor above the original.
The back of the floor lifts up to reveal a
space for the storage of the ramp system.**



The ramp slides out from under the new floor to allow the crew to set up the system.



The crew members then slide the ramp forward and place it over the yellow hook.



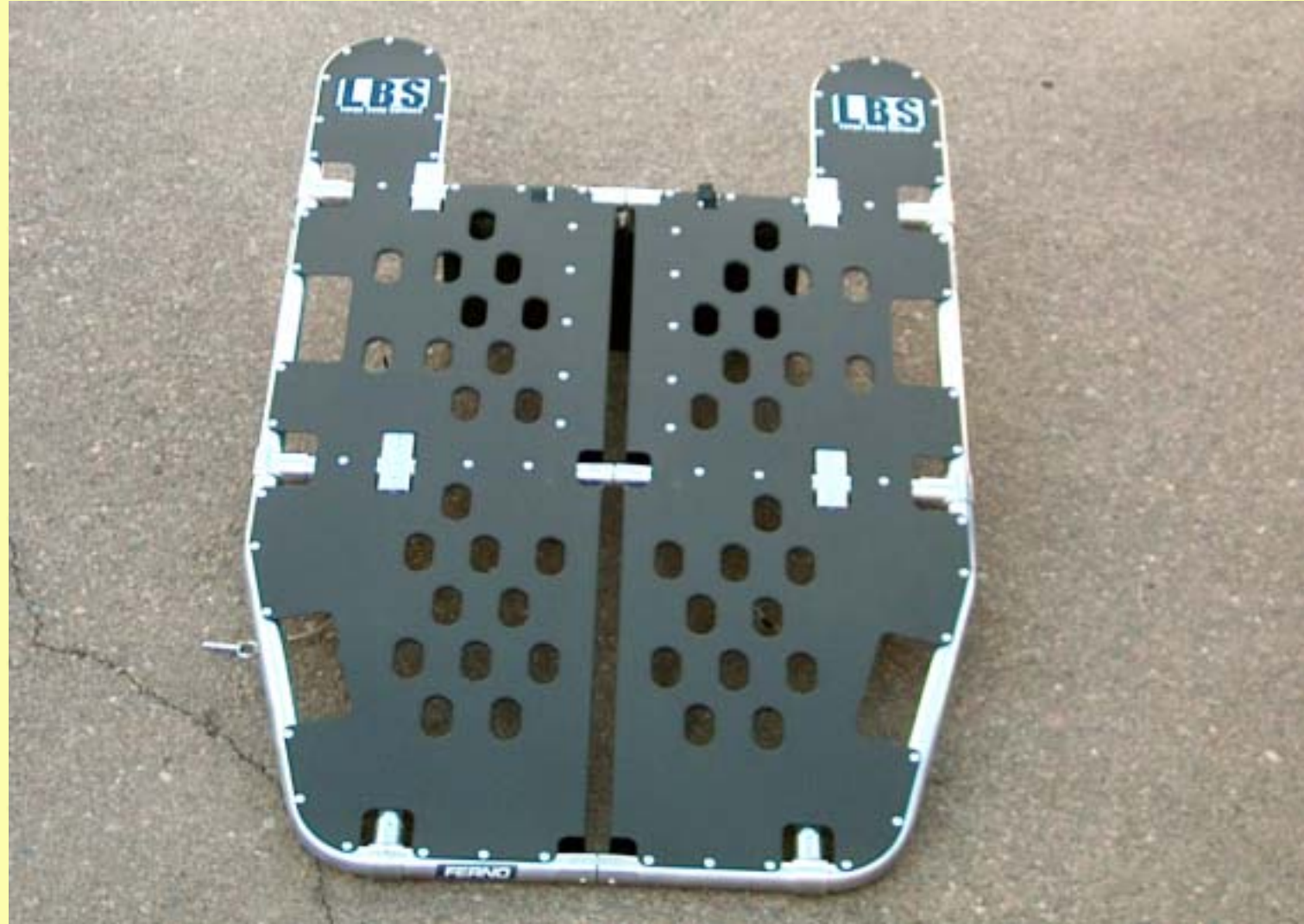
Our Tucson-based Unit has a different ramp design. Instead, they use 2 ATV style ramps, and store them in a side cabinet instead of creating a raised floor.



The Phoenix-based Bariatric system uses the Ferno Proflex cot. The Proflex model can handle 650 lbs. in the fully raised position and 900 lbs. when in the down position.



A new deck is available for wider support. It is the Large Body Support or LBS system. It uses six quick release pins to secure it to the Proflex.



The whole system of deck and cot provides for a safer and more comfortable transport for the obese patient. Crew safety is also improved with the Proflex.



Our Tucson-based Unit created a wider cot designed to hold more than 1000 lbs.



A winch is used to bring the cot in and out of the unit using the ramp system.



Above: Phoenix-based units have the winch body built into a cabinet with only the cable and hook showing.



Right: Tucson-based unit uses a different design.

Pressure must be applied to the winch line at all time, both inward and outward.



The winch handle trigger pictured on the right actuates the winch for our Phoenix-based Units.

Our Tucson-based Unit uses the remote trigger shown below.



The winch is attached to the Proflex cot with nylon straps and carabineers.



The attachment straps are wrapped around the Proflex front bar between the wheels and the extension bars.



**The exact lay
out of the
attachment
straps is
shown here**



The winch hook is attached to the straps using the yellow pulling ring.



A patient is always secured by straps onto the stretcher before loading into the ambulance.



While loading the patient, one member of the crew will winch the patient in while the other members of the crew guide the Proflex cot up the ramp.



Care must be also taken to ensure that the side rails of the Proflex cot are in the horizontal position when loading. If the rails are in the down position they will jam in the securing device as seen in the picture.



Care is taken when the cot reaches the balance point when winching into the unit.



When the cot is fully in the unit, the airbags are re-inflated before the patient is transported to the destination. The process is reversed to lower the patient out of the ambulance upon arrival.

For additional information on the Southwest Ambulance Bariatric Care Units visit our website at www.swambulance.com or please contact Josh Weiss, Public Information Officer at: 480-655-7235