



Cadillac Backpack: The Rescue Carrier™ by Tough Traveler Ltd.

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Many EMS bike teams are exploring options for carrying their medical equipment other than the traditional trunk bag and panniers mounted on a rack. Newer designs in backpacks offer more comfort to the wearer, compartmentalization, and the ability to carry a hydration system. The patent-pending Rescue Padre by Tough Traveler offers these features and more.

Mike Campbell and I tested this backpack over the past few months to see if it would live up to its rugged reputation. Tough Traveler sent us several bags to field test. We opted to try the Rescue Padre. At 2840 cubic inches, it was the optimal size for our medical and personal gear.

The Rescue Padre is a bright orange bag with color-coded elastic interior pockets. It has reflective strips around the outside for increased visibility. We had no trouble fitting our medical equipment into this bag. The main compartment is top-loading and has a water-resistant drawstring top. The exterior features color-coded compartments to hold a variety of medical gear. Our bags also came with a padded O2 cylinder protector for a C size O2 bottle.

Other features, as described on the Tough Traveler website, include:

- Internal pouch for a hydration pack.
- Fully-padded, breathable-mesh back.
- 1” thick, wide waist belt, and 3/4” thick shoulder straps.
- Load-control straps, sternum strap, and mini-internal frame for balance and weight control.
- Front pocket organized for intubation items, with elastic slots and internal pocket with clear vinyl window.
- Zippered padded pocket on one side and a padded open pocket with Velcro® web closure on the other side, designed for carrying a radio or other communication equipment.

As avid users of backpacks during bike events, one of the main problems we have experienced in the past is comfort – or lack thereof. Backpacks designed for walking/hiking/skiing/etc., can be uncomfortable in the riding position. The Rescue Padre was very comfortable in the riding position and offers a variety of adjustments. It is one of the most comfortable backpacks we have used. The Rescue Padre boasts a mini-internal frame suspension system and a mesh back to allow for ventilation which helps prevent that embarrassing sweat-soaked back when you take off the pack.

A USA manufacturer, Tough Traveler has been manufacturing luggage, back packs, and baby carriers out of USA-made materials for 37 years in the Albany, New York, area. The Rescue Padre is definitely the “Cadillac” of backpacks for EMS applications. It also has a “Cadillac” price at \$390. This may seem like a budget buster; however, this would likely be a one time



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purchase as this is a rugged pack that will take years of abuse. Quantity discounts may be available for groups and agencies, and many Tough Traveler products are on the HIRE Multi-State Contract.

Another great feature we need to mention about Tough Traveler is that they can custom design a backpack for your department's specific needs. They offer a variety of colors, and offer custom embroidery and screen printing. You can check out their products at www.toughtraveler.com/remed.asp, or call 1-800-GO-TOUGH or service@toughtraveler.com for more information.

Steve has been a firefighter/paramedic/bike team member with Franklin Fire Department for three years. Previously, he served 10 years as a paramedic and bike team member for Williamson Medical Center. An avid cyclist, he has provided EMS support for advanced classes at the IPMBA Conference. He was certified as an IPMBA EMS Cyclist in 2000 and an IPMBA Instructor in 2001. He can be reached at steve.denny@franklin-gov.com.

Mike has been with Williamson Medical Center for 20 years, including 10 years with the EMS division. He has eight years on the bike team as mechanic, trainer, and event coordinator. He is an avid cyclist and also provides EMS support for advanced classes at the IPMBA Conference. He was certified as an IPMBA EMS Cyclist in 2000 and an IPMBA Instructor in 2006. He can be reached at bikemedic1282@comcast.net.

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