

Accident  
victims  
pay more  
of the bill

Ambulance fees  
partly uncovered

By Peter DeMarco  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

A standoff between ambulance companies and auto insurers is leaving more and more victims of car accidents in Massachusetts getting stuck with ambulance bills.

Auto insurers traditionally paid the full tab for the emergency rides resulting from car accidents. But as more insurers have balked at paying the full bill, in an effort to keep their own costs in check, ambulance companies have increasingly turned to the consumer to make up the difference.

Caught in the middle of a confusing battle that is being waged behind the scenes, many consumers have simply paid these mysterious bills, which can range from modest amounts to more than \$100. But many who have resisted paying have found themselves ensnared in collection agency nightmares and even civil court cases.

Because the shift in what insurers will pay for ambulance services has taken place in the absence of regulation or publicity, there seem to be no clear standards for what are acceptable costs to pass on to the consumer, and how the process should be handled.

Ambulance companies say they don't like going after consumers for bills they believe should be paid in full by insurers. But they say they would not survive if they simply absorbed the loss.

"We take people to court every Thursday," said Kevin Foley, executive director of Cataldo Ambulance Service of Somerville. "I don't like to, but put yourself in our position. What if we discounted our insurance bill for our fleet of ambulances by 20 percent? Our insurance company would cancel us. We have fair rates and deserve to be paid."

AMBULANCE FEES, Page A6

Inside Today  
A judge's legacy



Hiller Zobel retires this week from the Middlesex Superior Court bench, leaving behind a reputation for discipline, a love of the judicial institution, and a sheaf of controversial rulings. **Living/Arts, C1.**

**Train blaze kills 370**  
Passengers are caught inside a moving inferno as the rear cars of a crowded overnight train headed for southern Egypt catch fire. **World, A8.**

**Night owls' guide**  
Midnight films, bustling coffee shops, and a wide array of music are vibrant parts of the Boston area's nocturnal world. **Calendar.**

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RUSHING TO GOLD



Americans sped to victory yesterday in the first Olympic men's skeleton competition in 54 years and the first women's competition ever. Jim Shea Jr., a third-generation Olympian, celebrated his win while holding a photo of his grandfather Jack, a double-gold speedskater in 1932 who was killed in an auto accident last month. Tristan Gale showed the flag after her triumph in the event, in which sliders ride headfirst down a bobsled track at high speed. **E1.**

US falling short of its war goals

Officials concede  
Qaeda elusiveness

By Anthony Shadid  
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Four months into the campaign in Afghanistan, US officials acknowledge that American forces have killed or captured only one senior Al Qaeda figure and seven far less prominent leaders. The lack of success has kindled frustration within the military and second-guessing among congressional leaders and policy makers.

The inability to capture Osama bin Laden or any members of his inner circle has led some officials and analysts to question a Pentagon strategy that was strikingly successful in removing the Taliban regime in just weeks, but that has found far less success in dismantling Al Qaeda.

Among the complaints: Special forces arrived too late in areas where Al Qaeda fighters had been hiding; US bombing focused too much on Taliban targets; reliance on local Afghan allies may have saved US lives but allowed bin Laden and others to flee.

All agree that Al Qaeda has proved far more elusive than expected.

"We're learning every day who's Al Qaeda, who is Taliban, **AL QAEDA, Page A15**



New York firefighter James Hanlon (left) with filmmakers Jules (center) and Gedeon Naudet, who produced the video.

Sept. 11 victims' relatives  
fight airing of new footage

By Mark Jurkowitz  
GLOBE STAFF

To Leslie Moonves, CBS's president, the two-hour special on March 10, featuring never-before-seen footage of the attack Sept. 11 on the World Trade Center, is "mesmerizing and highly emotional," a "powerful and historical work."

To Christie Coombs of Abington, who lost her husband on the plane that crashed into the north tower, the prospect of such a program is "devastating to people who had people in the building, people who had people in the

plane."

Coombs and other relatives of the victims are pleading with CBS to edit out graphic scenes of destruction. With the blessing of his board of directors, Roderick MacLeish Jr., president of The Massachusetts 9/11 Fund, a nonprofit organization offering support to those families, wrote to Moonves warning: "This new footage will serve to revictimize . . . family members who have already suffered the gravest personal losses."

MacLeish's letter said that if CBS runs footage from the movie **FOOTAGE, Page A14**

Israel sends  
tanks into  
Gaza City

New escalation  
follows fighting  
that left 22 dead

By Charles A. Radin  
GLOBE STAFF

DEIR IBZI, West Bank — Israel sent tanks and troops into Gaza City for the first time this morning, after announcing it would shift strategy to counter increasingly bold Palestinian assaults on its military positions.

The raid, a new escalation in the 17-month-old conflict, followed a day of Israeli retaliation after Hamas and Fatah gunmen killed six Israeli soldiers at the Ein Arik checkpoint near this village Tuesday night. At least 16 Palestinians, most of them members of the security and police agencies, were killed yesterday in a fierce counterattack launched by the Israelis. Ten died in and around Nablus, four in Gaza, and two in Ramallah.

Palestinians said Israeli tanks were entering the Gaza Strip from the south, east, and north, while naval gunboats pummeled Palestinian targets in the west. Palestinian security officials said tanks

had moved into Gaza City itself. News reports said calls went out on loudspeakers at Gaza City mosques urging Palestinians to rise to the defense of their land. The Israeli army declined to comment on the operation.

More bloodshed seemed certain in a conflict that daily looks more like a war than civil strife, as Palestinians cheered the slayings at Ein Arik checkpoint and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon pledged a "different course of action" in response to the new offensive.

Ra'anana Gissin, the prime minister's spokesman, said Israel would shift its tactics from large-scale operations to smaller, more mobile units and counter-guerrilla tactics. Israel would stay with its current policy of not harming Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat or dismantling the Palestinian Authority, he said.

In Deir Ibzi, a town of 1,700 people a five-minute walk from where the Israeli soldiers were killed, residents said yesterday they expect the spiraling violence to make their lives harder, but they rejoiced in the killings at the checkpoint, a place they described as a scene where Palestinians were frequently humiliated.

**MIDEAST, Page A11**

Orthodox Jews lose  
ruling on conversions

By Charles A. Radin  
and Michael Paulson  
GLOBE STAFF

JERUSALEM — The Israeli Supreme Court, wading into the long-simmering debate over who is a Jew, issued a watershed ruling yesterday declaring that the state must recognize as Jews people converted by Reform and Conservative rabbis in Israel.

Orthodox rabbis and politicians, who control religious life in Israel, immediately condemned the ruling and vowed to seek to circumvent or overturn it. Conservative and Reform leaders, struggling to create liberal Jewish alternatives in Israel, hailed the ruling, which they said would give new energy to their efforts to broaden religious pluralism here.

The ruling only requires the Israeli government to begin identifying Israelis converted by non-

Orthodox rabbis as Jewish on their national identity cards and to count them as Jews for statistical purposes. The ruling will not require Orthodox rabbis to honor those conversions, and Orthodox rabbis in Israel are expected to continue to refuse to allow Israeli weddings for Reform and Conservative converts to Judaism.

But supporters and critics said the ruling has broad significance because it recognizes the legitimacy of the liberal denominations that represent most American Jews and a small but increasing number of Israeli Jews.

"This is a real crack in the wall of Orthodox monopoly," said Rabbi Ehud Bandel, leader of the Conservative movement in Israel. "It is a crack we are determined to widen."

But the ruling was denounced **JEWS, Page A10**

Harvard  
raises its  
AP credit  
standards

By Patrick Healy  
GLOBE STAFF

The Harvard University faculty has decided to stop awarding college credit to students who score a 4 on Advanced Placement exams, calling into question the academic value of a test score earned by 279,000 high school students last year.

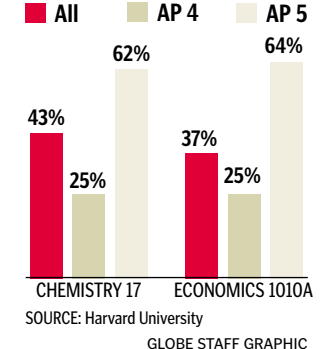
The new Harvard policy bucks the trend at most US colleges to give course credit for a score of 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams, which are scored from 1 to 5. Such course credits are a perk enjoyed by tens of thousands of incoming college students, who can use them to skip introductory classes and often save money on tuition.

Harvard's move also adds grist to a growing national debate about the rigor of Advanced Placement classes and exams, and whether the AP system lives up to its billing as a fair substitute for introductory college work. A report by the National Research Council

Close study

Harvard University changed its AP policy after finding that students who scored a 4 on AP chemistry and microeconomics exams were less likely to earn A's in these subjects at Harvard than students who scored a 5.

Percentage of students receiving A or A-



last week criticized AP classes in math and science, saying they were often superficial, and schools such as Yale, Stanford, and Boston University are reconsidering how they reward incoming students who have performed well on AP tests.

"Just because you're able to answer a bunch of stylized questions does not mean you're actually pre-

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT, Page A4**