



## **NAEMT Position Statement EMT or Paramedic Participation in Capital Punishment**

**Statement:** NAEMT is strongly opposed to participation in capital punishment by an EMT, paramedic or other emergency medical practitioners. Participation in executions is viewed as contrary to the fundamental goals and ethical obligations of emergency medical services.

**Background:** Historically, the role of EMTs and paramedics has been to promote, preserve and protect human life. NAEMT's *EMT Oath* is based on the basic principles of saving life, respect for human life and the non-infliction of harm to all recipients of emergency medical services.

Participation in capital punishment is inconsistent with the ethical precepts and goals of the EMS profession. NAEMT strongly opposes all forms of participation, by whatever means, whether under civil or military legal authority. EMTs and paramedics should refrain from participation in capital punishment and not take part in assessment, supervision or monitoring of the procedure or the prisoner; procuring, prescribing or preparing medications or solutions; inserting the intravenous catheter; injecting the lethal solution; and/or attending or witnessing the execution as an EMT or paramedic. The fact that capital punishment is currently supported in many segments of society does not override the obligation of EMTs and paramedics to uphold the ethical mandates of the profession.

NAEMT recognizes that endorsement of the death penalty remains a personal decision and that individual EMTs and paramedics may have views that are different from the official position of the profession. Regardless of the personal opinion of the EMT or paramedic on the appropriateness of capital punishment, it is a breach of the foundational precepts of emergency medical services, and a violation of the *EMT Oath*, to participate in taking the life of any person. Although we cannot forbid an EMT from participating in capital punishment, we should voice our concern that the participation violates the medical ethic of beneficence.

*Adopted: January 26, 2010*