



## **Position Statement**

### **Violence Against EMS Practitioners**

**Statement:** NAEMT believes that all EMS practitioners deserve to work in a safe work environment and that they should be afforded the same legal protection against assaults and other acts of violence as their colleagues in law enforcement and the fire service. NAEMT encourages all states to pass legislation to protect EMS practitioners against acts of violence while performing their official duties. Further, EMS agencies should ensure that they have policies and programs in place for their EMS practitioners that

- provide appropriate training in situational awareness
- encourage them to report all acts of violence, and
- provide support to help them cope and build resiliency.

**Background:** Violence against EMS practitioners is a frequent occurrence throughout the United States. In a 2005 NAEMT survey on this issue, more than one in two respondents (52%) reported that they had been assaulted by a patient. Unfortunately, there is no mechanism at the federal level to track these incidents, and to support what EMS practitioners know from experience – that their profession includes a heightened risk of being assaulted or harmed by other acts of violence.

[The EMS Voluntary Event Notification Tool \(E.V.E.N.T.\)](#) does provide a means for EMS practitioners to report instances of assault and other forms of violence. However, lack of broad awareness about E.V.E.N.T., along with a general reluctance of EMS practitioners to report such incidents, limits the number of episodes reported.

Currently, 42 states within the U.S. have passed legislation requiring increased criminal penalties for acts of violence against EMS practitioners. In addition to legal protection, EMS agencies can help their practitioners by creating a work environment that recognizes this problem, supports reporting, and provides practitioners with the tools and resources to prepare for and cope with these incidents.

### **References:**

[EMS Patient and Practitioners Safety Bill of Rights, NAEMT, March 13, 2015](#)

[E.V.E.N.T. Provider Violence Report for the Calendar Year 2014 included 26 acts of violence against EMS practitioners](#)

Adopted August 14, 2015