



NEWS RELEASE

March 8, 2013

Contact: Rebecca Dinan Schneider

1-800-346-2368

rebecca.dinan@naemt.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAEMT PRESENTS NEW EMS FITNESS GUIDELINES AT EMS TODAY

Washington, D.C. — This afternoon at the EMS Today conference, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) hosted a session on the new EMS fitness guidelines, developed by the American Council on Exercise (ACE) on behalf of NAEMT. “EMS Fitness Guidelines: It's Time To Get Healthy” was presented by NAEMT President Don Lundy and Sabrena Merrill, ACE Exercise Scientist and Curriculum Development Specialist, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center from 3:45 - 5:15 pm.

Lack of physical fitness within EMS agencies contributes to injuries and an increase in chronic diseases. EMS practitioners are seven times more likely than the average worker to miss work as a result of injury, and one in four EMS practitioners will suffer a career-ending injury within the first four years of service. Back injury alone is the primary reason practitioners leave EMS.

In an effort to reduce injuries from patient movement, improve practitioner health and create a safer EMS work environment, NAEMT established a formal relationship with ACE to create the *Task Performance and Health Improvement Recommendations for Emergency Medical Service Providers*. The NAEMT Board of Directors endorsed these recommendations on January 18.

These recommendations will help EMS agencies in recruitment and retention of EMS practitioners, and ultimately, will help reduce the number and severity of injuries on the job. In the session, participants learned about the research study that was conducted and the resulting recommendations.

To conduct the research upon which the recommendations are based, ACE sent a team of exercise physiologists to five sites across the country: Memphis Division of Fire Services, Tenn.; Austin-Travis County EMS, Texas; Charleston County EMS, S.C.; Upper Pine River Fire Protection District, Colo.; and North East Mobile Health Service, Maine. The sites offered a variety of service delivery models, environments, populations served, geography, and a diversity of EMS practitioners.

ACE exercise physiologists observed EMS practitioners bending, twisting, reaching, pushing, pulling and maneuvering while providing patient care. These repetitive motions were often done in tight spaces. ACE personnel also observed the external loads imposed by carrying or moving patients and equipment. The team used the site visits, ride-along encounters and staff interviews to generate initial observations and a practitioner task analysis. The results of the efforts were found to be consistent from site to site.

The recommendations are designed to achieve the following primary outcomes:

- Improve job-related physical capacity;
- Improve overall wellness;
- Create self-reliance.

“The EMS fitness guidelines are one of the most comprehensive, user-friendly tools ever developed for EMS practitioners,” says NAEMT President Don Lundy. “They can be a game-changer for any agency that wishes to initiate a program to help their EMS practitioners live healthy lives and serve in their chosen profession without injury.”

View the full EMS Fitness Guidelines [here](#).

About NAEMT

Formed in 1975 and today nearly 30,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the only national association dedicated to representing the professional interests of all emergency medical services (EMS) practitioners, including paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders and other professionals working in prehospital emergency medicine. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

#