



NAEMT Position Statement EMS Practitioner Safety and Wellness

Statement: The lifesaving and health care EMS practitioners provide to our patients is often done in a risk filled environment. NAEMT is committed to advocating for the safest practices and regulations that protect and promote the health of EMS practitioners. This requires the following:

- Enforceable legislation and regulations at the federal and state levels that specify safety practices and protective equipment and preventive interventions such as immunizations appropriate for the anticipated risks the practitioners may encounter.
- Employer provided information about specific hazards in the workplace and what protective practices and equipment are available in the workplace.
- Employer provided training on the use of safety procedures and protective equipment that is refreshed routinely.
- Employer provision of effective patient moving equipment and procedures that minimize the very significant risk of lifting and moving exertion injuries.
- Length of work shift that is balanced between the amount of active work done during that shift and rest time so that EMS practitioners do not work in a fatigued state past the point of safe practice.
- Significant involvement of EMS practitioners in local agency safety program development.
- Employer sponsored health and wellness programs to address issues related to diet, weight, smoking cessation, fitness and psychological stress.
- EMS system provision of EMS practitioner stress management.

Background: EMS is a very dangerous profession. The fatality rate for EMS practitioners is 2 1/2 times the national average. The non-fatal occupational injury rate is 5 times higher than the average for health care workers in general. EMS practitioners are 7 times more likely than the average worker to have lost work as a result of injury. This is

alarming data that is an indication of the degree of risk EMS practitioners face day to day and a testimony that the safety practices implemented to date need improvement.

Adopted: August 14, 2009