It’s EMS

NOT the Police Department

Linda A. Reissman, MS, CHEP, CIS
New York EMT Shot and Killed by Patient

Dallas paramedic responding to a reported shooting shot and critically injured

Police Chase Patient Who Allegedly Stole Ambulance, Threatened EMT

Man who assaulted paramedic released with warning

Ambulance shot while medics treat 'unruly' patient

EMT killed in the Bronx after man steals ambulance, runs her over

Police: Man chased paramedics with ax, tried to steal ambulance

NC man arrested after shooting into ambulance

Maine EMT Briefly Held Hostage during Call
Rockland man barricaded himself with the EMT in a law office,

Ambulance shot at while transporting stabbing victim
I HAVE A LOT MORE HEADLINES OF HOW DANGEROUS THE JOB CAN BE BUT MY PRESENTATION IS ONLY 20 MINUTES, NOT A WEEK
Tools of the Trade

EMS
- Scissors
- Oxygen tank
- Stethoscope
- Blood pressure gauge
- EpiPen
- AED
- Ambulance

Police
- Gun
- Handcuffs
- Police badge
- Police car
Yeah, So what’s your point Linda?
“We think of cops being in a hazardous profession, but not EMTs and paramedics.”

Jennifer Taylor
Assoc. Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health
Drexel’s School of Public Health.
You don’t have a gun
Don’t put yourself in situations that may have to be resolved by those in a profession that carry guns
EMS work has significant risks

- Complacency is deadly
- Being fatigued is deadly
- Speed is deadly
- Patients can be deadly
- Families/acquaintances can be deadly
- Our decisions can be deadly to us, our partners and our patients
- Our decisions affect our families
Just because it hasn’t happened to you or someone you know doesn’t mean it can’t!
Case Study – Detroit EMS

• Medic attempts to separate patient from her overbearing companion for treatment.
• Medics punched and slashed repeatedly with box cutter. Medics report “bleeding badly”.
• Female patient flees the scene
• PD ETA 5 minutes. Other EMS on the way
• Medics drive themselves to hospital
• “Don't send anyone over there, that guy is wielding a knife.”
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 2,600 EMS workers received hospital treatment in 2014 for injuries resulting from work-related violence.
Research takeaways

• EMS workers are more likely to be assaulted by patients than firefighters.
• Gender is not the determining factor of who gets assaulted.
• Dispatch information is not always accurate.
• Lack of knowledge and survival skill sets.
Recommendations

• Training in skills such as de-escalation.
• Signage in the back of ambulances that states, “It is a felony to assault a first responder,” may deter assaults.
• Flagging known problematic locations.
• Proper rest and breaks for responders.
Have you ever....

- Responded to a 10-13?
- Not call for police or back-up?
- Entered or did not withdraw from a potentially dangerous situation?
- Driven at a high rate of speed?
- Not set up flares?
- Worked when fatigued
Optimism Bias

- The belief one is more likely to experience good outcomes and less likely to experience bad outcomes.
- Disregard the reality of an overall situation because we think we are excluded from the potential negative effects.
- Increases as we survive bad experiences but that raises our risk exponentially.
If you *knowingly* place yourself and your crew into risky situations you need to assess the following...
Which trumps which?
Next Steps

• Assess your response habits and those of your coworkers
• Policies and training at the Agency level.
• Coordination with law enforcement