

Injury through assault remains a widely recognized, but little acknowledged, problem threatening emergency service personnel. Many EMS and fire personnel admit to being attacked by a violent patient, an angry bystander, or upset family member. The frequency of assault on our fire and EMS providers is alarming and while most attacks are not life threatening, the risk of serious injury is evident and unpredictable. Responders require a reasonable, liability-conscious, effective means of preventing and avoiding assault, before it occurs, and defending themselves once attacked.

Escaping Violent Encounters for First Responders (EVE4EMS/Fire) covers the basic skills required by any responder or provider when facing possible or imminent assault or use of force. The course focuses on good customer service skills along with mental and physical preparation fitness. The course also covers the patient vs attacker recognition and verbal skills to diffuse a potentially violent encounter.

In real pre-hospital situations, crisis creates chaotic rage, insulin shock overcomes reason, mentally challenged act on delusions, substance abuse enables superhuman strength, and career criminals lash out at responders even as they are engaged in life-saving efforts. EVE4EMS/Fire gives responders the ability to recognize a developing threat of assault, deflect it if possible, escape if practicable, and to defend if necessary. The program utilizes a combination of disciplines, bringing a potent combination of techniques into one comprehensive training course.

Responders face the daily prospect of assault and injury. Untrained responders' resort to creative methods such as "hit 'em with the oxygen bottle" – something this training will help to prevent. Improvisation of primitive tactics may later be found to be unreasonable, and sometimes even have criminal liability. Additionally, employers may be subject to huge civil liability exposure because of employee actions. EVE4EMS/Fire educates responders on reasonable use of force and when to deploy force if necessary. Beyond receiving training in the limits to force and restraint, participants are trained in articulation and documentation skills that will hold up to any scrutiny in any legal or ethical venue. Sound decisions in the face of a dangerous assault by a patient, and the articulation skills to prove the rationality of those responses, will reduce the liability exposure in any situation. Injury from assault can cost an employer thousands of dollars in unproductive wages, injury settlement, and legal fees. One instance can bring a hefty \$10,000 price tag as a starting point – the same amount needed to train 100 employees with a reasonable, liability-conscious, effective means of preventing and avoiding assault, before it occurs, and defending themselves once attacked.

Montgomery County Hospital District is in the early stages of planning instructor training in 2019. If you would like to be put on the interest list to have your instructors trained (or simply take the class and evaluate it for yourselves), please email Scott Pelczar at spelczar@mchd-tx.org. For more information about the program, go to <http://dt4ems.com/>.