



## Why Are EMS Providers So Brave?

When the NAEMT put the results of a completed study on their website I found myself bewildered. The results of the study revealed the number one reason for injury in the field (52%) was due to assault, but only 21% of EMS felt their personal safety was an issue.

This study can be seen here:

<http://www.naemt.org/forTheMedia/HarrisSurvey05.htm>

“Four in five EMS workers have experienced some kind of injury or medical condition as a result of their work, according to the NAEMT “Experiences with Emergency Medical Services Survey,” conducted by Harris Interactive.

A total of 1,356 NAEMT members participated in the survey, jointly commissioned by NAEMT and McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals, and reported that:

- More than one in two (52%) have been assaulted by a patient;
- One in two (50%) have been exposed to an infectious disease;
- Almost one in two (47%) have sustained back injury while performing EMS duties; and
- One in five (21%) have contracted an illness from a patient.”

A friend of mine, a fellow educator, Jerry MacCauley, sent me a book called "On Combat" by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman. While reading this book it became very clear. There is a chapter "On sheep, wolves and sheepdogs." Lt. Col. Grossman talks how the average person is a sheep.....not noticing all of the day to day stuff. Then you have wolves, the criminal element and then the sheepdog..... always protecting the sheep.

EMT's and Medics are the same a police and fire (sheepdogs) when it comes to putting other people (sheep) first. Although this is not always the right thing to do it happens way more than we would like to acknowledge.

Cops don't like to roll in blood. Firefighters don't rush toward bullets and cops don't rush into burning buildings. Each puts their own safety secondary when reality strikes. That is why the 21% of EMS feel their personal safety is an issue.

I think this is the main reason EMS doesn't train in DT like they should. Defensive Tactics should be an integral part of ongoing EMS training. EMT's and medics are on the same scenes as police and with 52% of EMS providers assaulted in the field..... ***Safe scenes are apparently not that safe!***