



Highlights:

Mental Health Care on - and Off - the Job

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For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: (301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov.

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Mental Health Care on - and Off - the Job

May is [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) and serves to focus on the one in five Americans who live every day with mental illness, often in near silence because of the stigma our society still attaches to it. Despite this, more and more people are making their struggles public in order to break down these walls and create a safer environment for themselves and others to live.

First responders regularly see situations involving people with mental illness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) published a new guide to help first responders manage these cases safely and without violence. "[Dealing with a Mental Health Crisis](#)" (PDF, 1.68 Mb) includes a quick assessment, how to determine if someone is a danger to themselves or others, suicide warning signs, and a list of common medications and why they are prescribed.

But while we are taking care of others, we need to be sure we are taking care of our own. The percentage of first responders with chronic mental health issues is higher than the national average due to stressors related to work duties. Fortunately, there is a lot more help available now than there once was, and amazing support networks and resources specific to first responders.

In addition to the resources on the Mental Health Awareness Month's website and [NAMI](#), the National Volunteer Fire Council's [Share the Load Program](#) focuses on fire and EMS personnel, including the video "[Warning Signs to Know](#)." The [Fire-fighter Behavioral Health Alliance](#) also offers extensive support and resources. Law enforcement personnel can find support through [CopsAlive.com](#) and [BadgeofLife.com](#).

Do not hesitate to contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) (1-800-273-8255) if you are in crisis; it is not only for people considering suicide. Your work organization may also have an active employee assistance program you could contact. In addition, the website [The Mighty](#) provides a supportive, safe community for those living with mental illness, disability, and chronic disease. Bottom line - remember that you would seek treatment for a physical ailment if it was affecting your life; seeking treatment for a mental illness that affects your life is no different.

(Source: Various)

Office of Bombing Prevention Virtual Training

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used in the Brussels and Paris attacks caused concern that similar attacks may be tried here. There is increased need and interest in effective training for IED awareness for state and local responders. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Bombing Prevention (OBP) offers Virtual Instructor Led Training (VILT) on a variety of IED topics.

The [VILT training schedule](#) is updated regularly and usually displays the offerings for the next 90 days. Courses available:

- Introduction to the Terrorist Attack Cycle
- Homemade Explosives Awareness and Precursor Awareness
- IED Construction and Classification
- IED Explosive Effects Mitigation
- Protective Measures Awareness
- Response to Suspicious Behaviors and Items

Select the desired course and date from the listings and you will be automatically directed to the online application process. Registration must be completed two business days prior to class start date. The website also lists technology requirements for access.

In addition to their virtual training, [OBP offers on-site training](#) around the country. These courses are on demand and also focus on IEDs and bomb-making awareness. Those interested in scheduling training or finding out what is being offered regionally should contact their local Protective Security Advisor or email the OBP for more information.

(Source: [OBP VILT Program](#))

Updated Toolkit Centers on Fire-Based EMS

The third edition of the "[Fire Service-Based EMS Electronic Toolkit](#)" (PDF, 6.88 Mb), produced through a cooperative effort between five fire service organizations, delivers updated fire service-based EMS information to fire service administrators and managers.

The toolkit is divided into three sections. "Fire Service-Based EMS General Information" discusses the benefits of fire-based EMS and links to support documents for these systems. "Fire Service Integrated Community Healthcare Partnerships" contains tools and resources that can help engage healthcare partners in the community.

This edition contains a new third section "Response to Incidents Involving Violence," a hot topic among fire and EMS departments. This section links to resources produced by a variety of industry organizations and associations including an active shooter incident management checklist, a guide for improving first responder survivability, and Rapid Assessment Medical Support (RAMS) program information.

The information and talking points provided in this toolkit can be used when communicating departmental needs and concerns during presentations to the public, community leaders, the media, or to local government officials. These conversations have the potential to influence the future of the department, and the information in the toolkit can help support good decisions.

(Source: [IAFC](#))

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