



HOT TOPICS

Oshkosh Fire Department



CHIEF'S CORNER



The sun is finally starting to shine. Our clocks have sprung forward. Each day gets a little warmer. As it does, we are able to get out and participate in the activities that we love.

Our trails and sidewalks have bicycles going in every direction. As you and your friends and family take them for a spin does everyone have a proper fitting helmet to protect their heads? Have you reviewed traffic safety rules with the children?

Lots of folks are on the water too. Most are casting fishing lines, but soon other pleasure boaters will be out. Does your boat have an adequate number of life jackets? Are they the right size for those on board? Is your cell phone fully charged before you go out on the water?

Asking yourself these few simple questions may make the difference between a great day outside and a tragedy. The Oshkosh Fire Department wishes you a happy and safe spring and enjoy the fresh air!

--Chief Mike Stanley

PREVENT, PREPARE, PRACTICE

by John Holland, Public Information Officer

Spring is in the air. Time to get those bicycles out and hit the road. Before you do that, make sure that your bike is in safe working order and that you are wearing a helmet every time you ride. A helmet helps protect your face, head, and brain if you fall down.

The U.S. Department of Transportation points out that, over the course of the past few years, only 17 percent of fatally-injured bicyclists were wearing helmets. If a bicyclist wears a helmet, the chance of head injury decreases by 50 percent and the chance of head, face and neck injury by 33 percent!

In 2013, *The New York Times* reported that cycling had the highest concussion rate among all sports, including football! That's why it's so important to wear your bike helmet whenever you are on a bike, even if you're only going for a short ride.

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PREVENT, PREPARE, PRACTICE

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How do I know if a particular helmet is right for me?

First of all, the helmet should be snug on your head. Put your fingers in the air holes of the helmet like a bowling ball. You should have to turn your head in order to turn the helmet side-to-side.

Next, make sure you have it secured properly on your head. The straps should be tight enough so when you open your mouth wide you can feel the helmet pull down slightly. Speaking of the straps, they should form a V directly under each of your ears once everything is tightened up. If they don't, adjust the buckles on the side up or down until they do.

Finally, make the sure the helmet is straight across on your head. There should only be two fingers width between your eyebrows and the front, bottom of the helmet.

Wearing a bike helmet is something that should be automatic. If children learn it at an early age it will be. Parents that's where you come in. Make sure you lead by example and always wear your helmet while biking. Children listen to only a small portion of what you're saying, but they are always watching you. Okay, now your noggin is safe. Get out there and enjoy the fresh air and exercise.

HELMET SIZING GUIDE

EYES

Only TWO fingers should fit in the space between your eyebrows & the bottom of your helmet



EARS

Line your TWO fingers up with the straps; the V of your fingers should be right at your earlobe



CHIN

Hook TWO fingers between your chin. There should be no extra space



EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Lieutenant Drew Jaeger

Life Safety Initiative 6 deals with medical and physical fitness. Our department has come a long way in recent years, from fitness and on duty workouts being an occasional practice to one encouraged by department leadership and utilized by a majority of our members. The department member self-funded weight club (***well at least most of us have paid up - hint hint***) has been augmented by a city funded budget item to include purchase of some equipment.

They say that doctors are sometimes the worst patients. Do we have a little bit of that tendency as well? I encourage all of my colleagues, active and retired, to take advantage of an annual physical exam. They are covered by insurance plans for free or minimal cost. Members of the dive and hazmat teams currently get a department paid biennial exam. Periodic skin exams are also recommended.



Steve K. is healing well from his recent cardiac bypass surgery. He noted that a combination of family history and encouragement from an OFD brother caused him to have a calcium scan. You may dread the thought, but it is a good idea to complete the 5 minute painless non-invasive procedure. I think all of us would much rather hear stories at the retirement dinner or annual bowling tournament of how our members persevered over a health challenge, rather than stories of how one of us ignored a warning sign until it was too late.

Greg S. recently shared his perspective and passionate encouragement to all members to complete an annual exam. He noted that his recent health challenges with both cardiac issues and cancer were completely asymptomatic, and discovered as part of his periodic dive team physical. He noted that the initial diagnosis came only 8 months after having received a clean bill of health from a more routine exam with his personal physician.

Rick S. who will join the ranks of the retired prior to the publishing of this newsletter, noted that in his case, his initial symptoms of unusual fatigue followed a call. The wise thing that he did was to acknowledge that something was not right. He sought care from our fellow department members directly after the call; his action eventually led to cardiac surgery.

One of the most rewarding aspects of our jobs with the fire department is when we are able to work as a team and successfully "save" someone, whether it is a medical cause or fire. We have all learned that such "saves" often look very different than the TV version of a few chest compressions, a couple breaths and the person wakes up. It has been suggested that the ones we save aren't the ones in cardiac arrest, but patients with less severe symptoms that we direct for follow up. We know from training and experience that certain symptoms deserve further examination than a few minutes with our finest paramedics in someone's living room. Should we then consider that the brothers listed above, and several others you probably know, as "saves" since they sought definitive care prior to a tragic outcome?

Here's to hoping that you take advantage of our department fitness and health support options. Be willing to try a new fitness routine and schedule that dreaded exam!

WELCOME NEW HIRES

Please join me in welcoming four new employees to the Oshkosh Fire Department!



Left to Right:
Chad Witmer
Thomas Diener
Dan Brown
Kyle Mollen

Chad Witmer is from Wausau Wisconsin and completed the Fire Medic Program at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) in 2018. He has served as a battalion chief with the South Area Fire District and has gained a great deal of relevant emergency medical services experience while working as a paramedic.

Thomas Deiner is from Sheboygan Wisconsin and graduated from Sheboygan North High School. He completed the Fire Medic program at Lakeshore Technical College and served as a firefighter with the Town of Sheboygan Fire Department. He has also gained a great deal of relevant emergency medical services experience while working for Orange Cross Ambulance.

Dan Brown is from Green Bay Wisconsin and graduated from Pewaukee High School. He went on to complete a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Marketing from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. Dan has served as a firefighter with the Stevens Point Fire Department. He has also gained a great deal of relevant emergency medical services experience while working as a paramedic.

Kyle Mollen graduated from Little Chute High School and went on to complete the Fire Protection Technician Program in 2018 from Fox Valley Technical College. Kyle has served as a firefighter with the Stevens Point Fire Department. He has also gained a great deal of relevant emergency medical services experience while completing his paramedic certification and completing his internship with the Oshkosh Fire Department.



WHAT'S NEW

After over 31 years of dedicated service to the City of Oshkosh and the Oshkosh Fire Department, Captain Rick Scherer aka "Ricky Release" retired March 30. Early in his career he obtained the nick name because of the number of release forms he was able to obtain from his patients.

Rick became a valuable asset to the Hazardous Materials team and also provided great leadership as he worked his way up to being a captain. As Rick rides off into the sunset, we wish him a happy, healthy and prosperous retirement.



Suicide has become way too common for first responders. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) raises awareness and supports programs to educate, advocate and help those affected by mental illness.

Please support NAMI by either walking or running the 5K beginning at Oshkosh North High School on Saturday May 1. The event provides a place to celebrate and honor those who are living with mental health issues and remember those who have died.

Date: Saturday, May 1st.

Start Time: 9:00 a.m. CDT

Registration: Registration ends April 30, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. CDT. A 25% discount is available to firefighters/paramedics and their families when you use the Coupon Code: **Fire**. Our team name is **Oshkosh Fire**. **Sign up here:**
<https://runsignup.com/Race/WI/Oshkosh/NAMIOshkosh5KforMentalHealthSuicideAwareness>



<https://www.lexipol.com/resources/todays-tips/why-should-first-responders-wear-seat-belts/>



NAMI 5K WALK RUN

TODAY'S TIP
with Gordon Graham

Why Should First Responders Wear Seat Belts?

WATCH NOW

Share This Tip

KITCHEN TABLE TRAINING - STEP POTENTIAL

by Lt.Instructor Greg Stelter

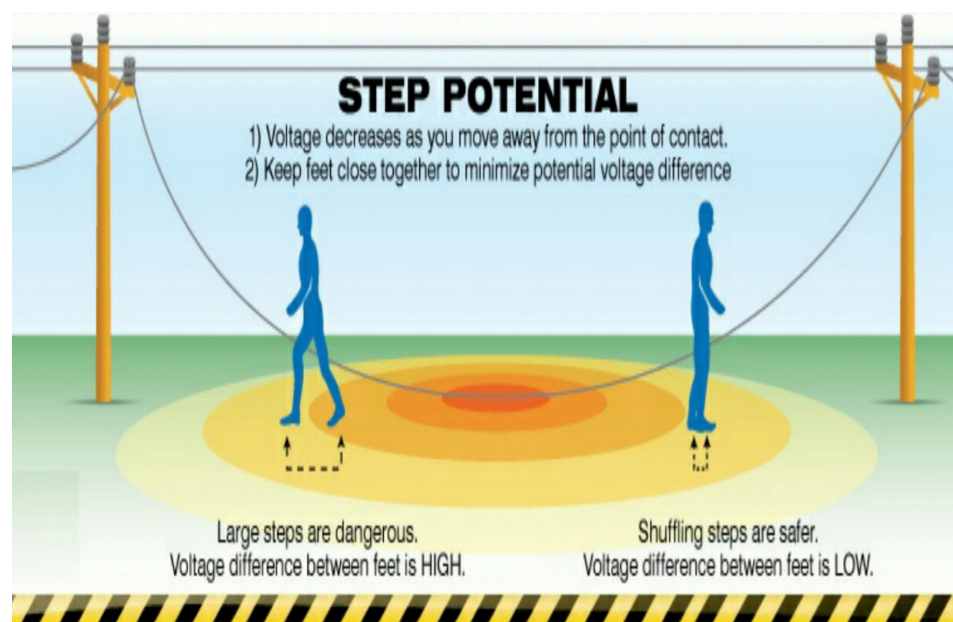
We frequently encounter downed power lines. We see them when vehicles strike utility poles or when service lines are exposed to fire and become detached from a structure. Once a power line is on the ground, what are the risks?

When a live conductor is on the ground, electricity spreads across the surface of the ground like ripples or rings. Each ring is at a different voltage. If you are near the conductor and you take a step, one foot touches one ring while the other foot is on a different ring. An electric potential (Step Potential) develops across your body, and current will flow through it.



In this image below, the firefighter on the left is stepping on rings with a voltage difference of 2500V. Electrical current at 2500V will flow up one leg, through the body, and down the other leg. This is how you can be electrocuted by simply walking near a downed power line.¹

If you find yourself in the vicinity of a downed power line, you must take small, shuffling steps away from the line with your feet close together and in contact with the ground at all times. Do not take large steps and do not allow your heels to pass your toes. This ensures both feet remain in areas of similar voltage.²



Continue shuffling until you are a safe distance away: **at least 30 feet away** from a downed distribution line (found in neighborhoods) and **at least 100 feet away** from a downed transmission line (found on large towers). These clearance distances are minimums; always use the maximum possible clearance.² Never move closer to a downed line; only use this method as a means of escape.

References

<https://nwahnew.memberclicks.net/assets/15-step%20potential%20awareness.pdf>

https://firstresponder.ngridsafety.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/11672_ngrid_fr_email

MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

by Dr. Kerry Ahrens



Do you have symptoms of exhaustion, feel increasingly frustrated with nearly every patient encounter, or are feeling less productive overall? If so, then you may be experiencing *provider burnout*. This is an increasing concern in our healthcare system, of which you are a very important part.

Major contributors of burnout include a surge in documentation demands (no, this is not Chuck's fault but rather due to increasing regulatory requirements), lack of rest (yes I have noticed the number of CAD texts you receive); in addition to increased emotional and physical stressors which absolutely challenge your motivation to be the best at what you do - paramedics AND firefighters AND leaders.

Burnout is a major issue and often leads to medical errors shown to lead to increased rates of patient and paramedic harm. Many surveys of burnout historically have been done for nurses, residents and physicians. However, EMS workers are only examined in a few studies despite the profound emotional risk given the care you provide in a public environment with a high potential of traumatizing effects. Humans are visual beings: no one can possibly comprehend your experience after you have pulled out the sole survivor of a single MVC rollover with 3 other fatalities in the car... other than another first responder with a similar experience.

This is not just an issue recognized in the United States. A 2018 German study evaluated burnout and safety in EMS workers via a survey correlating factors of burnout to rates of reported injuries (due to safety compromising behavior) and medical errors with/without adverse events. The vast majority of 1,101 responders were male, younger than 40, full-time non-specialized paramedics with an average of 12 years of experience. Approximately 1/3 of participants stated they experienced an injury in the last 3 months; 74% of those stating the injury was due to a measurable error; most commonly due to not watching speed limits and sub-optimal initial check of the ambulance.

How does burnout affect your patients? According to the German study, most mistakes were due to improper printing and/or interpreting an EKG strip and not checking the glucose level in a patient with altered mental status. Overall, up to 40% of the German respondents showed a high degree of burnout. The biggest contributors were feelings of depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment.

A second study by Boudreaux et al found that a significant portion of an EMT's job satisfaction and psychological well being is associated with the degree to which they are experiencing job related stress. The most maladaptive outcomes included Accepting Responsibility, Confrontive Coping, and Escape/Avoidance. Thus, EMT's who were more likely to handle stress with self-blame, aggression, hostility, and risk taking, wishful thinking, escape tendencies, and/or avoidance were more likely to endorse more negative outcomes correlating overall with high levels of burnout compared to those without those tendencies.

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE *Continued from page 7*

In the world of paramedics, there is a high degree of burnout which correlates to job dissatisfaction and indirectly relates to performance and increased mistakes. The results are that many leave the field despite all of your prior hefty investments. Take a good look at yourself. Have you had a bad call lately (pediatric death, frustration with the 'frequent fliers', etc). If so, do some self reflection. You ALL are excellent clinicians or you would not be on OFD ambulances.

I know that what you do is SO very important -- whether or not it is recognized by society in the way you wish it could be; it is noticed by me, the people you have helped and by many others who do not speak out. Be sure that you are reacting in a healthy manner to your job's stressors including use of **critical incident stress de-briefing (CISD)**, talking with a mentor or a CAP team member so that you can find the level of satisfaction with your very challenging job.

References:

1. Baier et al. Burnout and safety outcomes - a cross-sectional nationwide survey of EMS-workers in Germany. BMC Emerg Med. 2018;18(1):18-24.
2. Boudreaux et al. Stress, job satisfaction, coping, and psychological distress among emergency medical technicians. Prehosp Disaster Med. Oct-Dec 1997;12(4):242-9.



Other options

Your CAPS Team

Aurora Employee
Assistance Program

800-236-3231

 Aurora Health Care®

aurora.org/eap

Change is the law of life & those who look only to the past
or present are certain to miss the future -- John F. Kennedy

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LET'S CONNECT