

JANUARY 2024

# FIRE & RESCUE HEALTHY NEWS

Brought to you by the South Heartland District Health Department  
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

## Keep yourself healthy against the Triple Threat

Keep yourself healthy against  
Influenza, Covid-  
19/monovalent, and RSV, with  
vaccinations.

Check the South Heartland  
District Health Department  
website for more information  
about when and where you can  
get updated immunizations.

[southheartlandhealth.ne.gov/  
what-we-do/immunizations/](http://southheartlandhealth.ne.gov/what-we-do/immunizations/)



National Alliance on Mental Illness

For more information, visit:

[www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Public-Safety-Professionals](http://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Frontline-Professionals/Public-Safety-Professionals)



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[southheartlandhealth.ne.gov](http://southheartlandhealth.ne.gov)

*Thank you for  
your constant  
service to your  
communities!*

## Staying safe while responding

duties create an inherent risk for on-the-job injuries and illnesses. Research shows that EMS workers have high rates of fatal injuries and nonfatal injuries and illnesses.

### EMS workers face many potential job hazards, including:

- Lifting patients and equipment
- Treating patients with infectious illnesses
- Handling hazardous chemical and body substances
- Participating in the emergency transport of patients in ground and air vehicles

### Protect yourself from injuries:

- Sprains & strains: Practice safe lifting by using proper equipment, asking for help, and using good body mechanics. Keeping the object you're lifting close to your body, bend your hips and knees while keeping your back straight. Avoid turning or twisting while lifting.
- Exposure to blood & body fluids: Use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as goggles, gloves, and face masks, and follow standard precautions.
- Falls: Wear slip-resistant footwear, don't rush, and choose the best walkways. If you need to walk backward, make sure there is someone behind you, directing your steps and helping you down stairs or maneuver around objects.

### How departments can keep their first responders healthy and prepared:

- Promote safe patient-handling techniques by providing proper and safe patient-handling equipment; train responders on how to use the equipment and use proper lifting and transport techniques.
- Protect EMS from exposure to harmful substances/body fluids by practicing the units exposure control plan; decontamination procedures; waste disposal; and providing proper PPE.
- Educate workers on ways to identify and reduce fall risks such as being aware of their surroundings/environment and adjusting as needed while providing care to the patient.

### Most common injuries:

- Body motion (6,000 injured EMS per year)--this comes from excessive physical effort, poor posture (especially when lifting), or repetitive movement.
- Exposure to harmful substances (6,000 injured per year)--exposure to blood or respiratory secretions (such as a cough, sneezing, or spitting).
- Slips, trips & falls (4,000 injured per year)--tripping over objects, weather issues such as ice, etc.
- Motor vehicle incidents (2,000 injured per year)--this includes sudden stops, swerves, and crashes (especially in ambulances or fire trucks).
- Violence/assaults (2,000)--helping to be prepared for these incidents with risk management, de-escalation, and self-defense training.

### Helpful Resources

The Centers for Disease Control has several resources helpful for first responders. Visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ems](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ems) for more information.

More resources for EMS injury prevention can be found by visiting [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ems/othlinks.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ems/othlinks.html)

[www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov) also have valuable resources.