



Kerri Hatt

Taking Care

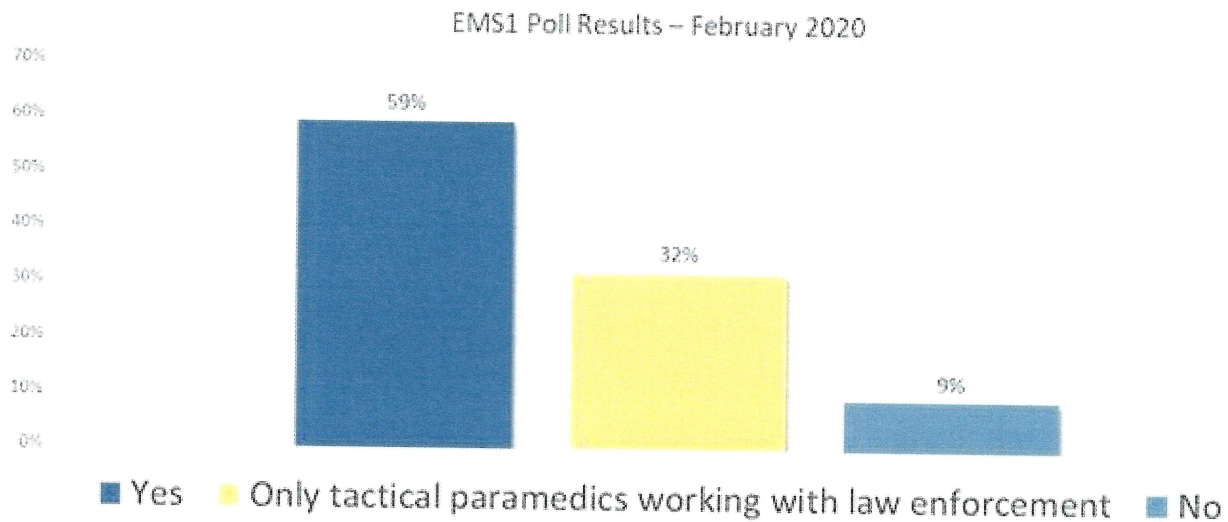
Paramedicine perspective: Arming EMTs, paramedics

Readers respond, does on-duty concealed carry protect providers or threaten scene safety?

Today at 12:29 PM **DEC 2020**

Arming medics has been a long contentious topic in EMS. The consensus on on-duty concealed carry has shifted substantially in recent years. In a [2017 EMS1 poll](#), just 9% of respondents believed EMS providers should be allowed to carry a gun on duty, as opposed to a [2020 poll](#), in which only 9% of respondents believed EMS providers should **NOT** be allowed to carry a gun on duty.

Should paramedics be allowed to carry guns on duty?



Recently, two Arkansas paramedics responding to a reported orthopedic injury were [shot at the scene](#). One of the paramedics returned fire, killing the suspect. Both paramedics were [operated on and released](#).

We asked readers, "Should EMS and fire personnel be allowed to carry firearms on duty?" Here's a selection of the responses.

The opinions below are those of the individual respondents and not representative of their employers.

MAKE SAFE, ON-DUTY CONCEALED CARRY LEGITIMATE

Yes, they should. With that said, agencies should have very solid policies in place to ensure that anyone who is carrying has had some predetermined level of training and is regularly deemed proficient. People should be able to protect themselves at all times. However, I don't think that this right should just be completely unrestricted. If a provider can legally carry a concealed firearm, has some level of advanced training (which would need to be determined obviously), and can prove proficiency regularly like a police officer has to, he/she should be able to exercise that right. The job of an EMS provider is incredibly dangerous. An innocuous call in western New York a number of years ago resulted in a gun being pulled on the EMS crew. One EMT was **shot and killed**. The others had no recourse but to hide and be scared that the murderer was going to find them. In my opinion, it is their right as a living creature to defend themselves through any means necessary.

The problem is that these providers are working for an employer and in a regulated field. I get that. I simply think that employers and regulators who make rules, regulations and laws should consider a person's innate right to protect their own lives and consider a culture that neither endorses nor condemns people for their decision. Instead, they should create a culture that simply requires those who decide to be able to protect themselves to have the training and mindset to do so safely.

I would contend that many of the EMS providers out there who have concealed carry permits already carry on-duty anyway. This is evidenced by the recent news story in which paramedics came under fire and one of them **drew his own weapon** and killed the attacker. Decision-makers should just make it legitimate by having policies which make sense.

— *Scott Bowman, BA, EMT-P, CACO, executive director, Valatie (New York) Rescue; and lieutenant, Albany County Sheriff's Office - EMS Division*

2 Ark. paramedics shot on duty, return fire, killing suspect

Officials say after a gunman shot two paramedics in the ambulance after an argument, one of the paramedics returned fire, killing the gunman

Dec 17, 2020

Editor's Note:

The recent violent incidents in NYC and Arkansas are grim reminders that medics are regularly threatened, attacked and harmed by the people they have been called to assist. Read more about how EMS can anticipate and prepare for violent attacks in [this analysis by EMS1 Editorial Director Greg Freise, MS, NRP](#).

Arming the EMS and fire workforce has been a hot topic of debate. Please weigh in by answering the poll question: [Should EMS and fire personnel be allowed to carry firearms on duty?](#) If you would like your comments to be considered for inclusion in a future EMS1 article, [fill out a short form here to share your thoughts](#).

By Laura French

PINE BLUFF, Ark. — Two Arkansas paramedics were wounded in a shooting while responding to a medical call on Thursday.

Police say the medics were at a residence in Pine Bluff aiding a woman with knee pain when the patient's boyfriend, identified by authorities as Kevin Curl Jr., 22, approached them and began arguing with them, [according to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#).

Curl was said to have pushed Paramedic John Spriggs Sr. who then reportedly punched Curl before Curl pulled out a firearm and shot both medics approximately three times in the chest, pelvic and abdominal areas, according to a police news release.

Authorities said Spriggs returned fire, striking Curl, who was later found dead inside the residence with a gunshot wound to the chest. Spriggs was found by officers lying on the ground next to the ambulance while Paramedic Joshua Godfrey, 35, was found sitting in the back of the ambulance. The paramedics were transported to the hospital to be treated for gunshot wounds. The female patient was also transported to the hospital.

The shooting is under investigation by Pine Bluff detectives.

Both paramedics work for Emergency Ambulance Service, Inc. (EASI), [according to Deltaplex News](#).

The Arkansas Ambulance Association released a statement on Facebook saying, "Our thoughts and prayers are with members of the EASI family in Pine Bluff this morning. At last report, the EMS personnel are in serious but stable condition following surgery.

Read next: [The armed EMT](#)

Tags > [Armed Paramedics](#) • [Crime](#) • [EMS Assaults](#) • [EMS Assaults & Self Defense](#) • [Fatal Incidents](#) • [Police](#) • [Shooting](#)

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

◀ [Police: Cleveland EMS providers robbed at gunpoint by 3 juveniles](#) [Video: Wash. AMR ambulance destroyed in fire, patient arrested](#) [NJ EMTs accused of punishment in ambulance say it was](#) ▶

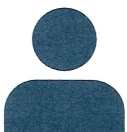
JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Please [sign in](#) or [register](#) to write your own comments below.
Before commenting, please read [EMS1's Commenting Policy](#)



Posted by **KEII** Dec 20, 2020 at 9:16 AM

Hope they both have a speedy recovery and no longterm health problems from the incident.



Posted by **bear186** Dec 19, 2020 at 10:34 PM

Huh... Didn't realize anyone still read P1.

