

A focus on personal, patient and community safety...



APRIL 14, 2026 15th EMS Financial Symposium | APRIL 15-17, 2026 18th Annual National EMS Safety Summit: A Safety Academy



18th Annual National EMS Safety Summit

A Focus on Personal, Patient, and Community Safety

*Convened by the Mile-High Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma
Advisory Council (Mile-High RETAC) since 2008
Embassy Suites by Hilton- Downtown Denver
1420 South Street, Denver, Colorado 80202*

18th Annual National EMS Safety Summit Course Descriptions

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Personal Wellness/Burnout

9:15 – 10:15

***Leading on Empty: The Balance of Service and
Self***

Asbel Montes, BS-BM

Founder & Managing Partner at Solutions Group

Course Description:

The EMS profession is demanding and rewarding, yet it often leaves those in leadership roles running on empty. When your days are spent responding to crises and serving others, it's easy to neglect your own needs. This session

addresses the critical issues of burnout and explores strategies for finding balance in a profession defined by service. Attendees will learn how to recognize the warning signs of burnout, understand the importance of setting healthy boundaries, and find ways to refuel their energy—both physically and emotionally. With practical tips and honest reflections, this session aims to help leaders embrace the concept that self-care is not selfish but essential for sustainable service and leadership.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the leading causes of burnout in the EMS industry.
- Recognize when service to others becomes a disservice to self.
- Absolve themselves of the guilt that accompanies setting necessary boundaries.
- Determine various ways to find a healthy balance between personal well-being and professional service.

EMS Workplace Violence

11:30 – 12:30

Risks of Violence for EMS Personnel

Brian Maguire, Dr.PH, MSA, EMT-P
Epidemiologist and Consultant

Course Description:

Emergency medical services (EMS) clinicians face increasing risks of occupational violence from patients, bystanders, and others. This presentation will examine the latest data and trends, highlighting the scope, causes, and consequences of violence against EMS clinicians. Attendees will gain insight into the personal and organizational impacts of these incidents, as well as evidence-based strategies to reduce risks. Practical guidance will be provided for EMS clinicians and leaders to develop prevention policies, training programs, and support systems that enhance safety and resilience.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify current trends and contributing factors in occupational violence against EMS personnel.
- Analyze the short and long-term impacts of violent incidents on providers and organizations.
- Apply evidence-based strategies to reduce violence risk through leadership actions, policies, and training.

Personal Wellness

1:00 – 2:00

Pre-employment Physical Agility Testing

Kolby Miller

Chief Executive Officer, Medstar

Course Description:

EMS is physically demanding work, yet many agencies still rely on generic medical clearances or agility tests that do not reflect the real tasks crews perform. Lifting stretchers, moving patients in tight spaces, carrying equipment, and sustaining physical effort over long calls all place specific, measurable demands on the body.

This session focuses on using job-specific pre-employment physical agility and human performance evaluations built around an agency's actual EMS tasks. Participants will learn how to define their operational physical requirements and translate them into defensible lift, push, pull, and carry assessments that align with real equipment and environments.

The goal is to improve safety, reduce preventable injuries, and ensure new providers are physically capable and prepared for the job on day one, while maintaining fairness and consistency in the hiring process.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the essential physical demands of EMS work specific to their agency and service environment
2. Understand the limitations of generic agility tests and medical clearances
3. Define measurable lift, push, pull, and carry requirements based on real EMS tasks and equipment
4. Design or refine a job-specific pre-employment physical agility and human performance evaluation
5. Improve hiring fairness while reducing injury risk, early attrition, and workers' compensation exposure

Safety Culture & Miscellaneous

2:00 – 3:00

What we Know About Occupational Risks for EMS Clinicians

Brian Maquire

Course Description:

Emergency medical services (EMS) clinicians face some of the highest rates of occupational injury and fatality among healthcare and public safety professions. This presentation will review the scope of these risks, how they have evolved

over time, and how they compare to other occupations, Drawing on recent research and national data, the session will highlight common injury and fatality causes, emerging trends, and high-risk scenarios Attendees will also learn about effective interventions and organizational strategies to reduce risks, and protect the EMS workforce

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize current data on occupational injury and fatality rates for EMS clinicians.
- Compare risk patterns in EMS to those in other healthcare and public safety professions.
- Discuss evidence-based interventions to reduce EMS occupational risks.

Traffic Safety

3:15 – 4:00

Traffic Incident Management (TIM)

Brandon Hipp

Statewide Traffic Incident Management Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management, Colorado Department of Transportation

Course Description:

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) is essential for protecting responders and the public while ensuring roadway incidents are cleared safely and efficiently. This presentation provides a clear, practical overview of TIM principles, emphasizing how coordinated, multi-agency response improves safety, reduces secondary crashes, and restores normal traffic flow.

Participants will explore the fundamentals of responder safety, scene assessment, quick clearance strategies, and effective communication among law enforcement, fire/EMS, transportation agencies, towing and recovery professionals, and dispatch operations. The presentation also highlights the National Unified Goal (NUG) for Tim and introduces tools and technologies that enhance on0scene coordination.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the core concepts of TIM.
- Understand the importance of integrated, collaborative incident response across all disciplines involved in roadway operations.

Driving and Roadside Safety

4:00 –5:00

Ambulance and Safety: The Ongoing Crises, Still Crashing After All These Years

David McGowan, EMT-P (Ret.) MBA
Senior Consultant, ACETECH

Course Description:

Despite the wealth of data highlighting the dangers associated with ambulance operations---from injuries and fatalities to costly lawsuits and negative public perceptions---there remains a troubling lack of progress in prioritizing safety within Emergency Medical Services (EMS). What will it take to finally address this critical issue?

EMS has made remarkable advancements in clinical care over the past 50 years; however, the improvements in reducing crashes are embarrassingly minimal. This presentation aims to confront the hard and uncomfortable questions surrounding ambulance safety, shedding light on the factors that impeded progress and discussing potential strategies to enhance safety protocols. Join us for a thought-provoking exploration of this essential topic, as we seek to spark dialogue and drive meaningful change.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify common human factors that lead to crashes in EMS.
- Understand the implications of professionalism in safety culture.
- Develop actionable steps to engage all staff in the safety process.

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Safety Culture & Safety Miscellaneous

9:05 – 10:15

***Leadership in the Ambulance: Empowering
Teams in High-Stress Situations***

Matthew Streger, Esq. MPA, NRP
Attorney at Law, Keavney & Streger, LLC

Course Description:

EMS is the ultimate high-stress environment, but are we really creating environments where our personnel are enabled for success? We continuously see examples of providers who are placed in difficult situations making bad decisions to the detriment of our patients and our systems.

This lecture will look at the real-world situations we are faced with daily and how we can better foster team dynamics that create success. These dynamics include rapid team formation clarity in communications, use of checklists and Crew Resource Management techniques, building trust and promoting a culture of learning, post-incident debriefing, and mindfulness.

We will discuss real-world tools that you can implement that will allow you to begin the process of culture change, create better outcomes, and make a meaningful difference in our profession.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the nature of the high-stress EMS environment and how it leads to decision-making.
- Develop skills for preventing and addressing decision-making under stress.
- Develop skills for team leadership from the frontlines.

Patient Safety

10:15 – 11:00

You're a Patient Safety Manager, Now What?

Philip Grieve, BS, NRP

Regional Manager of Patient Safety, Global Medical Response

Course Description:

Describe the challenges of the transition from field provider to patient safety manager. Key lessons learned, mistakes to avoid or embrace, morale and moral injury, the magic of risk management and the perils of navigating complexity in a world that wants things to be simple.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how the role of patient safety manager differs from field provider. Anticipating and managing mistakes as you learn
- Describe the skills needed for risk management.
- Understand how to navigate complex systems.
- Understand the interactions of EMS politics, organizational culture, leadership, legal issues with bedside medicine.

Scene Safety

11:15 – 12:00

Ambulance Conspicuity and Interiors for Safe Vehicle Operations

Douglas Kupas, MD, NRP, FAEMS

*Professor of Emergency Medicine
Division of EMS, Geisinger EMS*

Course Description:

EMS agencies often design their ambulances to be unique or marketing billboards rather than focusing on safety. This presentation will describe designs that focus on conspicuity and visibility. Interior design will also be discussed with considerations of safe seating arrangements, equipment and personnel restraint, other factors.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe EMS vehicle exterior design and marketing influences that decrease safety.
- Describe safe ambulance interior design for equipment storage and securing.
- Describe forward-facing seat design in EMS vehicles.

Scene and Personal Safety

12:45 – 1:30 ***Protective by Design: Enhancing EMS Safety Through Smarter Uniforms***

Douglas Kupas

Course Description:

Traditional EMS uniforms that are based on law enforcement or fire designs are unsafe. This presentation will use uniform examples from around the world to demonstrate safer and more functional designs. The discussion will focus on solutions available in the U.S. and how uniform changes are affected by the culture of safety, employee preferences, and other factors.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand ANSI apparel requirements for safe operations along highways.
- Discuss the use of high-visibility uniform and the use of retroreflective material.
- Understand principles of change management and culture of safety on uniform changes.
- Discuss the use of uniforms to identify EMS clinician roles and rank.

Safety Culture and Safety Miscellaneous

1:30 – 2:30 ***Crew Resource Management and EMS: Fighting the Power***

Matthew Streger, Esq. MPA, NRP
Attorney at Law, Keavney & Streger, LLC

Course Description:

How do you look at your partner and tell them that they are doing something wrong? Something that you think is going to harm the patient, or even harm you.

Now, how do you accomplish this if you're talking to your supervisor, or a physician or law enforcement?

In the 1970's and 1980's, there were a series of commercial aviation crashes where crew members knew that there were major safety risks happening, but they did not know how to tell someone above them in the power gradient that bad things were happening. The aviation industry adopted Crew Resource Management (CRM) as a structured technique that would help resolve the issue.

This lecture will review the history of how CRM developed and how the aviation industry adopted it, along with relevant lessons for healthcare. We will then learn the structured process for addressing concerns up a power gradient in a formal, structured, and escalating ladder, using real-world healthcare situations.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an understanding of the need for a structured process to address concerns up a power gradient.
- Develop an understanding of the CRM methodology.
- Apply CRM to real-world situations that are commonly faced in healthcare and EMS.

Safety Culture & Safety Miscellaneous

3:00 – 4:00

'Quo Vadis Rampart One' 49 Years Later: Safety and Supervision of EMS

Philip Grieve

Course Description:

In 1977 Nancy Caroline MD, the Godmother of PHC, wrote a scathing report describing the patient as "... the victim of the carnival atmosphere that pervades so much of PHC." What can Patient Safety learn in 2026 from Nancy Caroline in 1977?

Learning Objectives:

- Outline the systems and humans that can impact our understanding of patient safety.
- Describe what 'unsafe supervision' in patient safety could look like.
- Compare and contrast proximity and expertise of supervision
- Describe training and its verisimilitude to the field?

Mental Health Fatigue

4:00 –5:00

Pillars of Wellness

Jordon Long, Former Firefighter, Paramedic

Course Description:

This session explores how to build a sustainable, fulfilling career while preventing burnout and compassion fatigue. Through the lens of five wellness pillars—Rational Fortitude, Emotional Intelligence, Physical Health, Financial Security, and Professional Fulfillment. We'll share proactive strategies to support mental health. Special focus will be placed on strengthening relationships, both personal and professional, as a foundation for resilience and long-term career longevity. Attendees will leave with practical tools to enhance well-being and thrive in demanding roles.

Learning Objectives:

- Attendees will identify the five pillars of wellness.
- Attendees will understand how to proactively support mental health.
- Attendees will understand how to strengthen relational skills.

Friday, April 17, 2026

Safety Culture & Safety Miscellaneous

9:05 – 10:00 ***Cleared for Takeoff: What EMS Can Learn From Aviation's Safety Revolution***

Donnie Woodyard Jr. M.A. M. I., NRP, WP-C

Executive Director, Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice, (EMS Compact)

Course Description:

Aviation's safety record didn't happen by accident — it was built through decades of deliberate culture change, hard-won lessons, and systems designed to learn from failure. EMS faces many of the same operational hazards aviation once did, and we have an extraordinary opportunity to accelerate our own safety journey by adapting what already works. In this session, paramedic and pilot Donnie Woodyard, Jr. draws on nearly 30 years of dual experience on both sides of the safety divide to walk through the specific systems aviation built—from NASA's confidential near-miss reporting program to Crew Resource Management and fatigue science—and shows how each one can be adapted to reduce line-of-duty injuries, ambulance crashes, and patient harm in EMS. You'll leave with concrete, "Monday morning" strategies you can implement in your agency immediately.

Session Abstract

Every year, EMS practitioners are killed and injured in ambulance crashes, on-scene incidents, and through the cumulative toll of fatigue and operational stress. Meanwhile, commercial aviation—an industry that once measured safety in catastrophes—has engineered itself into one where a fatal accident is a once-in-a-decade anomaly. The difference isn't luck or technology alone. It's culture, systems, and an unwavering institutional commitment to learning from failure rather than punishing it.

This session, presented by a career paramedic who is also an active pilot, provides a detailed crosswalk between aviation safety frameworks and their direct EMS applications. The centerpiece of the presentation is an in-depth examination of NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS)—the confidential, voluntary near-miss reporting program that transformed how the aviation industry identifies and corrects hazards before they become fatalities. The presenter has personally filed ASRS reports and will walk attendees through the complete lifecycle: the incident, the report filed within hours, NASA's de-identification process, the receipt issued to the reporter, and the legal protection that receipt provides against FAA enforcement action for non-willful deviations. The session will explore why this model works, why EMS has nothing comparable, and what a national EMS safety reporting system modeled on ASRS could look like.

Beyond ASRS, the session addresses four additional aviation-to-EMS safety crosswalks: Crew Resource Management (CRM) and its application to two-person ambulance crews operating in high-acuity, time-critical environments; the role of standardized checklists in eliminating reliance on memory under stress; evidence-based fatigue management and duty-time limitations versus EMS's widespread 24-hour shift culture; and the NTSB's root-cause accident investigation methodology versus EMS's tendency to stop at "human error." Each topic is paired with concrete, actionable strategies that attendees can begin implementing at the agency level without waiting for national policy change.

The session concludes with a candid discussion of why EMS has been slow to adopt these proven frameworks, and the absence of a single national EMS safety oversight body equivalent to the FAA, followed by a call to action for attendees to become the catalysts for change in their own organizations.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the structure and function of NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) and articulate how a comparable program could be designed for EMS to capture near-miss data and reduce practitioner injuries.
2. Identify at least three aviation safety practices—including Crew Resource Management, standardized checklists, and evidence-based fatigue

management—and explain how each can be adapted for immediate application in an EMS agency.

3. Analyze the systemic barriers that have slowed adoption of aviation-style safety culture in EMS and develop a strategy for implementing at least one safety improvement in their own organization within 90 days.

Personal & Scene Safety

10:00 – 11:00

Forcible Entry- A Systematic and Measured Approach

Roger Patterson, Paramedic, LP
Commander, Health and Safety Officer
Austin-Travis Co. EMS

Course Description:

This presentation discusses the criminal and civil liabilities of forcing entry into a home or other structure when EMS responders believe exigent circumstances exist. Department policies and procedures on the topic are often vague and rarely provide guidance on the decision to force entry. This presentation will cover developing a policy that considers the legal aspects, provider safety, and patient access and care.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the criminal and civil liabilities of forcible entry for both departments and individual responders
- Lay out a systematic approach to deciding when to force entry
- Provide a policy example that considers the legal aspects, provider safety and patient access and care.

Safety Culture & Miscellaneous

11:00 – 12:00

From Founders to Future: How AI Autonomous Vehicles, and Emerging Technologies Will Redefine EMS Safety

Donnie Woodyard Jr.

Course Description:

Modern EMS has been entering the most significant safety transformation since the 1960s. Technologies once considered futuristic, such as AI-assisted documentation, autonomous vehicles, predictive analytics, telemedicine-enabled drones, and VTOL aircraft, are now being tested or deployed in EMS systems across the country. These tools are reshaping how clinicians assess risk, reduce cognitive load, document encounters, and connect patients to care.

In this session, Donnie Woodyard draws from international EMS system development, national leadership experience, and lessons from EMS founders like Dr. Peter Safar and Dr. Nancy Caroline to explore how innovation can dramatically enhance patient safety, provider safety, and community safety. Rather than replacing clinicians, these technologies create safer operating environments, reduce human error, improve transport safety, expand rapid-access capabilities in rural and mountain communities, and allow clinicians to focus on high-value care.

This forward-looking session will challenge participants to rethink assumptions, confront safety-limiting biases, and adopt a visionary leadership mindset to prepare their agencies for the next decade of EMS safety evolution.

Learning Objectives:

-Describe how the leadership principles that shaped the founding of modern EMS can guide safer integration of AI, automation, and advanced technology into current systems.

-Analyze how emerging tools such as AI documentation, autonomous ground vehicles, new air mobility platforms, predictive analytics, and augmented reality training can improve patient safety, provider safety, and system reliability.

-Identify key human-factor barriers (anchoring bias, normalization of deviance, tradition-locking) that hinder safety improvements and limit adoption of safer technologies.

-Explain the ethical and operational considerations required to implement advanced technologies while ensuring transparency, reducing risk, and strengthening safety culture.

-Apply modern leadership principles to design safer operational models, guide agencies through technological transition, and enhance resilience during periods of rapid change.