



# TRAINING INSTITUTE on STRANGULATION PREVENTION

## Strangulation Prevention E-News - March 2018

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO AND NATIONAL ADVISOR, DR. RALPH RIVIELLO

Welcome to another edition of *Strangulation Prevention E-News*. The Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention has launched this newsletter to share current and important information about non-fatal and near-fatal strangulation assaults. Each E-News will focus on one subject, highlight one organization or individual, and share one Featured Resource.

For this E-news, we zero-in on the role of Emergency Medical Personnel in handling non-fatal strangulation cases. We describe a toolkit of valuable resources for every paramedic. Emergency Medical Personnel include firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians/attendants. Our featured leader is Mayor Ken Shetter from the City of Burleson, Texas. He has demonstrated leadership in passing a ground-breaking new ordinance on the "Effective Response to Strangulation." Our featured resource is a training video clip of San Diego Firefighter and Paramedic Mitch Mendler, Joe Russo, Danielle Bebee and San Diego Police Detective Rena Hernandez (ret.), who demonstrate how to educate a victim about the danger of strangulation assaults to facilitate transport to a medical facility for further evaluation.



-Gael Strack, CEO & Dr. Ralph Riviello, American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)

## "DO YOU NEED A PARAMEDIC?"

### The Role of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Strangulation Cases

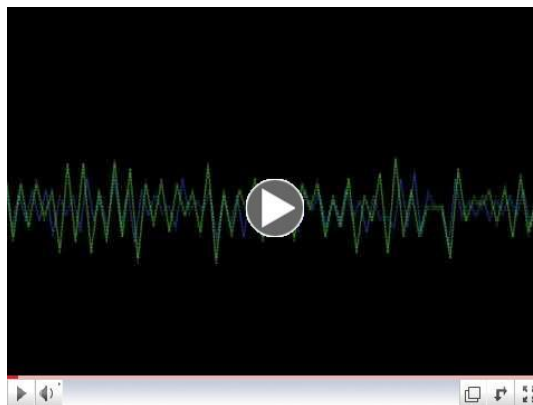
In our last E-News, we focused on dispatchers and the important role they play as first responders. Equally important are EMS. According to a recent article "Improving the Emergency Medical Services System's Response to domestic violence", the authors cited that almost **two million injuries and 1,300 deaths result from domestic violence each year**. Over a half million injuries need medical attention and more than 145,000 injuries require hospitalization of the victim. Researchers have determined that **between 22 and 35 percent** of women patients in emergency room settings are there for problems related to domestic violence. One-in- three female trauma patients is a victim of abuse. (Health Matrix, Volume 25, Issue 1, 2016).

Approximately **40-50% of all 911 calls are related to domestic violence**. EMS responders are generally the first to arrive at the scene, either before, after or at the same time as law enforcement. They are usually the first to provide emergency medical services to victims with injuries. Sometimes the injuries are visible, but in strangulation cases those injuries are mainly internal and usually barely visible to the untrained eye. Since most victims of domestic violence tend to refuse transport for medical attention, one of our biggest challenges is treating strangulation as a medical emergency. We need to help victims understand why medical attention is necessary.



*NFL Star Eric Weddle with the San Diego Paramedics at the August 2015 Advanced Course on Strangulation Prevention*

## 911 Call: "Do You Need a Paramedic?"



**Caller:** Hello?

**911:** Yeah, Michelle. This is Lynn at San Diego Police Department. Is this your husband or boyfriend?

**Caller:** My husband.

**911:** It's your husband?

**Caller:** Yes.

**911:** Okay. Does he have any weapons at all?

**Caller:** No.

**911:** What did he do to you?

**Caller:** He-

**911:** Okay, I want you to try to take a deep breath and calm down.

**Caller:** He tried to break my neck.

**911:** He did what?

**Caller:** He tried to break my neck and suffocated me. And he- (unclear speech)

**911:** Okay, do you need a paramedic? Okay, Michelle, do you need a paramedic?

**Caller:** No

**911:** Are you sure?

**Caller:** Yes, I'm sure.

**911:** Okay. He's inside your house alright. He's not there with you?

**Caller:** He might have taken off in the car right now.

**911:** What kind of car would it be? Hey, Michelle, I want you to take a deep breath and try to calm down, Okay? He's not right there, so he- (audio cuts out)

**Caller:** He- (unclear speech)

**911:** Okay, Michelle?

**Caller:** Yeah?

**911:** Okay.

**Caller:** I-I-I'm not crying. I just can't breathe very well.

**911:** Alright. Do you want a paramedic?

**Caller:** No, I'm o- I'm okay.

**911:** Are you sure? If you can't breathe...

**Caller:** How come I can't- How come I can't breathe? How come I can't- I can't -

## The Role of EMS:

There are many reasons why injured victims decline medical attention: fear of retaliation, to protect her abuser, lack of child care, involvement by children protection services, work obligations, financial limitations, more concern for immediate safety than health, not wanting to disclose the abuse, not believing anyone can help and/or a perceived lack of time. In many cases, victims simply do not understand or under estimate the seriousness of non-fatal strangulation nor the need for medical care.

This is where EMS responders play a critical role. When responding to domestic violence calls, they can ask important questions to identify injuries that may be hidden by clothing or are internal and not visible. They can look for clues of strangulation when the victim can't remember details or is too traumatized or afraid to speak. They will, of course, provide needed medical treatment and make appropriate transport decisions. Importantly, they can recognize and document physical findings relevant to the identification of non-fatal strangulation.

To read more **Download Chapter:**

**["Do You Need a Paramedic?" The Role of Emergency Medical Services in Non-Fatal Strangulation Cases](#)**

**This chapter will cover:**

When to Transport a Strangled Victim

Duty to Warn

Training is Critical

Training for EMS Responders is Optional in 48 States

Resources for EMS Responders



## RESOURCES FOR EMS RESPONDERS

- **Webinar:** [What Paramedics Need to Know About Strangulation with Dr. Ralph Riviello](#)
- **Screening Tool:** [Strangulation Assessment Card](#)
- **Guide:** [Medical Radiographic Imaging Recommendations](#)
- **Scholarly Writing:** [Improving The Emergency Medical Services System's Response to Domestic Violence](#), Health Matrix (2016)
- **Article:** [Initial Findings in Strangulation Injury Aren't Indicative of Outcome By Abigail T. Harning](#), EMT-P, M.Ed, December 2015
- **Article:** [Strangulation Trauma in Assaults: An Overview for Emergency Services Personnel By Robert S. Cole](#), CCEMT-P, August 2004
- **Article:** [Strangulation Injuries by J. Stephan Stapczynski](#), MD, FACEP, Emergency Medicine Reports (2010)
- **Study:** [What do EMS personnel think about domestic violence? An Exploration of attitudes and experiences after participation in training](#). J Forensic Leg Med. 2016 Fe;38:64-9.
- **Ordinance:** [City of Burleson, Texas, "Effective Response to Strangulation"](#) 2018
- **Protocol:** [San Diego County Strangulation Protocol](#), CA (2017)
- **Protocol:** [Fairfield Police Department, Connecticut](#) (2015)
- **Protocol:** [Maricopa Domestic Violence Protocol](#) Arizona (2012, Revised 2015)
- **Online Training with CEU:** [Domestic Violence Training for EMS](#), Wild Iris



- Online Training with Contact Hours: [Kentucky Domestic Violence](#), 2014
- Training Manual: [EMS Response to Domestic Violence](#), Alaska DHSS (1998)
- Training Manual: [EMS Response to Domestic Violence](#), New Mexico
- Video: [Why Paramedics Should Attend the 4-Day Advanced Course on Strangulation](#)

## FEATURED LEADER



Mayor Ken Shetter from the City of Burleson, Texas recognized a need in his City for a better response in the handling of non-fatal strangulation cases.

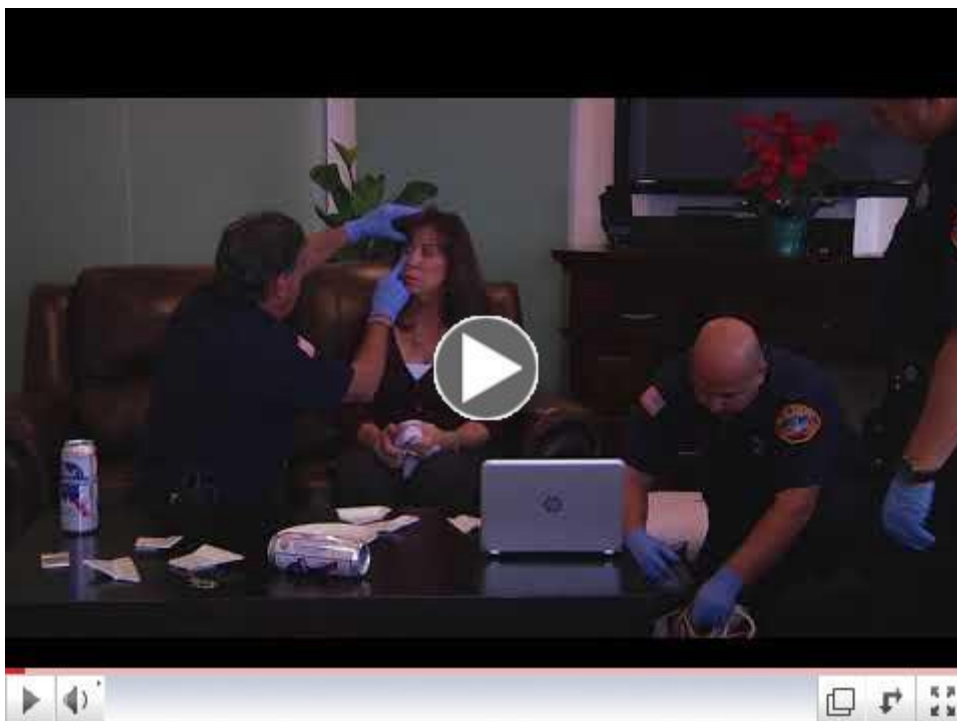
Over 60% of victims seeking services at One Safe Place, a family justice center, in Fort Worth, Texas reported being strangled by their partner. Mayor Shetter decided to do something about it, and he means business. He helped pass a new ordinance requiring EMS responders to be summoned to the scene of a domestic violence call when officers determine an act of strangulation has occurred.

The new ordinance also calls for a strangulation task force which will be tasked to develop and implement new tools and training for first responders confronted with suspected strangulation. Plus, the new law creates a penalty. Any violator may be punished through administrative action by the City Manager.

Thank you Mayor Shetter for leading the way. Your new ordinance will save lives.

[VIDEO: Burleson Cracking Down on Domestic Violence By Targeting Strangulation Cases](#)

## FEATURED RESOURCE



Our featured resource is a training video clip of San Diego Firefighter and Paramedic Mitch Mendler, Joe Russo, Danielle Bebee and San Diego Police Detective Rena Hernandez (ret.), who demonstrate how to educate a victim about the dangers of strangulation using the new strangulation assessment card.

The strangulation assessment card was developed by the San Diego Fire Department in partnership with the Institute. It was designed to assist EMS to easily determine the signs and symptoms of strangulation out in the field, using a quick checklist called "STRANGLE" to remember important key steps, understand life-threatening injuries, understand when to transport, provide the victim information about strangulation assaults, and also provide medical providers notice about the need for imaging and the new medical imaging recommendations.

We are grateful to the San Diego Fire Department and the San Diego Police Department who assisted with this training video as well as Dr. Bill Smock and Dr. Jim Dunford who reviewed and approved the strangulation assessment card.



**CALLING ALL MEDICAL  
PROFESSIONALS!  
WE NEED YOUR HELP!**



**Click here to help us**

**We need your help with a quick survey. Are you providing DV Strangulation exams?**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 29, 2018	Manhattan, KS
April 8, 2018	San Diego, CA - 24th Annual Scientific Assembly
April 10, 2018	Topeka, KS
April 13, 2018	Brattleboro, VT
April 16-17, 2018	Dallas, TX - Conference on Crimes Against Women
April 18, 2018	Clackamas, OR - Child Abuse and Family Violence Summit
April 24-26, 2018	Ft. Worth, TX - 18th Annual International Family Justice Center Conference - <a href="#">Register Here!</a>
May 7-10, 2018	Oklahoma City, OK - 4 Day Advanced Course
May 15, 2018	New York City, NY
June 11-15, 2018	Charlotte, NC - 4 Day Advanced Course
August 1-2, 2018	Brazoria Co, TX
August 21-23, 2018	San Diego, CA - 3 Day Master's Course on Strangulation Prevention <a href="#">Join the Wait List!</a>
August 24, 2018	San Diego, CA - Forensic Gun Shot Wounds
September 18, 2018	Wichita, KS
October 16-19, 2018	San Diego, CA - 4 Day Advanced Course (Save the Date!)
October 23, 2018	Rockford, IL

**[Click here for a full list of upcoming events](#)**

Missed an E-News? Visit our [Archive](#).



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