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UNIFORMED EMT'S, PARAMEDICS & FIRE INSPECTORS—F.D.N.Y.
LOCAL 2507, DC-37, AFSCME AFL-CIO
718-371-0310

UEEP Bulletin

A NEW BEGINNING

By **PATRICK J. BAHNKEN**, *President*
and **VINCENT VARIALE**, *President, UEMSO*

For far too long there has been a tangible division between the rank and file and our immediate supervisors. For many people, the relationship between supervisor and subordinate has been purely adversarial. This atmosphere of discord is nothing short of divide and conquer which is detrimental to all of us.

As we write this article, the new administration of our sister local the Uniformed EMS Officers Union is in the process of moving into our offices. It is the desire of the leadership of both locals to work together as partners for the benefit of all the members.

Each group has its own role and unique responsibilities but we all share the same goals and the same mission. Our goals are for better wages, better benefits and a less hostile work environment. Our mission is to provide quality patient care to the sick and injured in a timely fashion. Neither group can achieve their objective without the other.

In the spirit of this new beginning, we must work together to foster an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect. We must strive together as a team to resolve our issues in house rather than addressing them through the Bureau of Investigations and Trials.

For any of this to succeed, communication and understanding is the key. Each group must understand the duties and responsibilities of the other. We must be able to disagree while doing so respectfully and we must communicate with one another and work together to reach a resolution that

enables us to fulfill our mission without having to resort to discipline and hostility.

For too many years now, the many have fought among ourselves while the few have reaped the fruit of our labors. It

was not always like this. Years ago, it was the EMT's, Paramedics, Lieutenants and Captains standing united in the fight against a harsh and in some cases, sadistic management.

We worked together to get the job done and we did it without the need for inordinate amounts of Command Discipline or Formal Charges. We got the job done without the constant presence of eagles and stars. Ultimately, we got it done because we were more concerned with accomplishing the mission than we were with appeasing the ego of some of those above.

We encourage you to communicate with your supervisors and work with them. If you need help, contact your delegate or contact the local. Working together, we can get the job done without having to kick back a portion of our earnings in the form of fines and penalties.

Let's stop the us against us and go back to the us against them! In UNITY there is STRENGTH!

In Solidarity

Patrick J. Bahnken, *President*
and **Vincent Variale**, *President, UEMSO*



ANNUAL PICNIC
Sunday—August 30, 2009
1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Cunningham Park
Oakland Gardens, NY 11364
Adjacent Parking Lot # 2

DON'T JAM YOURSELF UP!

BY ISRAEL MIRANDA, *Vice President*

Brothers and Sisters, this year has started off with many issues needing to be addressed. The core problem is how management continues to micro-manage with no clear direction, leaders are people who have commanding authority or influence. There is a true lack of administrating this authority within the EMS command. Management continues to lead by intimidation, instead of motivation and education. The Department finds it much easier to write C.D.'s or prefer charges, than discuss or correct the issue or misunderstanding with the employee. B.I.T.'s continues to follow units and videotape employees' actions on a day to day basis. The drug-testing unit continues to attempt the drug testing of two members a day. You add this to the stress related to serving the public and responding to approximately 1.2 million assignments a year. We would all agree that our stress levels are of significant magnitude. If not for our professionalism, dedication and love for what we do, I don't think any of us would hesitate moving on.

Provisional employees must be extra careful with this type of management. Knowing that these employees have limited contractual rights in reference to disciplinary issue, will try to use this to their advantage. We as senior members of Local 2507 must educate our young members. We must help them understand their responsibilities and the rules of the system we work in. Provisional employees also need to understand that their off-duty conduct

could lead to separation from the department. With a criminal arrest you put yourself at risk with the Fire Department and Department of Health. The department has been very unforgiving with criminal convictions of provisional employees within the last couple of years. Of course it would depend on the severity of conviction and the provisional employees personnel record. But with no expectation of an administrative hearing or arbitration, you should assume the worst. Your best weapon is to educate yourself. Be aware that you are always entitled to union representation as a provisional employee.



As management continues to employ their tactics to diminish your morale, motivation, dedication and professionalism, we should always remind ourselves of who we are and why we do this job. We will not be divided, we will stand strong.

In Solidarity

Israel Miranda
Vice President

Newsworthy events can be called in or e-mailed to the following news media:

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The New York Times: news-tips@nytimes.com

COMMON PRACTICE, COMPLICATED MISTAKE



BY DONALD FAETH, RECORDING-SECRETARY

As a professional pre-hospital care provider, your primary goal on each call is to gather as much information as possible, in a relatively short period of time, while rendering sometimes life-saving or stabilizing care. How we accomplish that varies from provider to provider, depending on the type of situation one would encounter. In the conscious, oriented patient, we normally request some form of identification and their insurance card. By doing this, we don't interrupt our partners' acquisition of the history of present illness and physical exam, in order to acquire billing information. In the presence of an altered mental status, coupled with the absence of a family member, friend or close associate, how do you go about obtaining personal information about your patient????

I know what the common practice is...check the patients' pockets or personal belongings for some form of identification. But think about that for a second and understand the liability you are assuming. First and foremost, who gives you the right to do that? Have you ever heard of the charge of illegal search and seizure? Implied consent addresses the ability of the provider to render pre-hospital care and transport to someone who is not currently legally capable of making that decision for themselves. Rifling through your patients' pockets in pursuit of obtaining the person's name, address and date of birth, does not fall under this category, and thus, does not protect you.

Although well intentioned, your liability or risk, if you will, increases, in other ways also. First, and foremost, there is the issue of your safety. Some IV drug abusers put their used needles in their pockets for later use (yes, sometimes these people are not in the right frame of mind). Your latex gloves don't protect you very well when confronted with an uncapped dirty needle.

Under liability, what if, when this patient comes back around to their baseline mental status, the last thing he/she remembered was cashing their check before going out bar-hopping. "I had \$800 bucks in my pocket!" complained the astonished 27 y/o man as he acquired his personal belongings from the hospital clerk. "I bagged your stuff and sealed it with a hospital police officer as a witness, replied the clerk, but you should check with EMS, they brought you in." Now follow the bouncing ball... an inquiry is made, which translates to you being required to provide a statement, and possibly requires your appearance at headquarters for a CCU. (Meanwhile, you have no knowledge of the fact that this guy bought everyone a round in the bar in a drunken stupor after he came back from dropping a couple of 'C' notes at the strip club across the street)

Now remember, this type of situation is also sent to the Mayor's Department of Investigation (D.O.I.) since, if found to be true, raises the situation to a criminal matter. They look for three main things, motive, opportunity and intent. Motive, well, we aren't paid very well and everyone I know on this job,

myself included, has a pension loan out and/or is working a second job or killing themselves with overtime. Opportunity, well, you were alone with the patient for about 6 or 7 minutes while transporting to the hospital. Intent (*mens rea*), although difficult to directly prove, is a mental act that can be inferred through a persons' actions and surrounding facts. You might not even be notified of every accusation lodged against you, but there are people in these departments who are tracking patterns. Whether coincidence, real behavioral pattern, or just a byproduct of this type of work, this kind of complaint is lodged on a frequent basis. If you are implicated in several complaints of a similar nature (missing drugs or money), DOI/BITS will most likely set up a sting (mock situation) to prove what they believe might be your intent.

Larceny, is the act of intentionally taking property to which the person knows he or she is not entitled. Conviction of such will result in your arrest, loss of employment and revocation of your State certification. But I digress, 99.9% of our membership will never find themselves in this predicament, however, I can comfortably assume that 100% of our field personnel will be investigated at some point of their career due to a false accusation. So, you ask, how do you prevent this. The answer is simple, you can't... but you can minimize the scrutinizing eye through plausible deniability. I can state very clearly under oath and in writing that I have never entered a persons' pockets or personal belongings and as such, they won't be able to acquire statements from anyone else on the scene that stated that I did.

I understand the importance of the City receiving reimbursement for our services and its impact on our job security, but you don't get paid enough to take on the liability incurred to acquire billing information in this manner... nor are you legally allowed to. Have a police officer acquire the ID and document their shield number. If unwilling or unavailable, transport without and acquire it at the hospital through their staff. If this delays your 81 time, then, oh well, it's not the end of the world.


One final note, if you are accused of such an act, it's understandable if you get insulted, but don't lose your mind over it. Contact a delegate or the union office if you want assistance with writing your statement. Also, don't get angry at the system for investigating it... they are obligated to do so and ultimately, it's that same investigation that will hopefully clear your name. By not cooperating, you only do yourself a disservice. We are all aware that we work in a system where support from above us is rare and assumption of guilty until proven innocent is the general rule. Practice the rule of CYA every day and avoid giving these people ammunition to use against you.

Stay safe and be careful out there.

UNION CONNECTION SUMMER '09

BY MUATA GREENE

“Politics and Unions Historically” by Muata Greene, Labor Liaison. The United States has the weakest of labor movement unions in the developed world, unable to break from the two capital control parties, Democratic and Republican. This approach developed in the late 19th and early 20th century when labor decided rather than create a independent party of American workers, like British Labor or German Social Democratic. We should work within the two main stream parties of America. This was a shift away from a reformist past to limited goals, unions Declared Samuel Gompers the founder and president of the new AFL American Federation of Labor and that he should not seek the dream of a cooperative commonwealth or form independent parties to achieve power in government, but labor should devote itself to negotiating for higher wages and working conditions. This was the language of business culture, which Gompers embraced also



known as business unionism. What can we learn from this shift in labor political position? The current economic crisis is on the back of the American workers no bail out for us, unemployment is at all time high, jobs being sent to other countries, cutbacks in social services and the list goes on, there is no political party to speak for the American worker, we are left to negotiating for contracts that in the long run just keeps us above. The rising tide of a failed system. Both Democrats and Republicans play us like a fiddle. We need Labor power, we need our own representatives like other developed countries. Let's stop doing the same thing and expect different results.

Reference: Give Me Liberty! Volume 2 by Eric Foner.

YOUR SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT

By OREN BARZILAY, *Executive Board Member*

The shooting deaths of two small town providers in separate January incidents proved a chilling reminder that one day on the job could potentially be your last.

On January 17, EMT Melissa Greenhagen was shot by a stranger in Glasgow Montana.

Police report no homicide has taken place in the town with a population of 3500 in 15 years.

Then, two weeks later, EMT Mark Davis, 25 was fatally shot during a response to a private residence in Cape Vincent NY. a town that has a population fewer then 1000 people.

Incidents like the latter are among the most troubling pre-hospital providers face. The alleged shooter, admitted EMS to his home and was reportedly being treated for an anxiety attack. As the call progressed, he became agitated, and eventually grabbed a rifle. he allegedly shot Davis as he fled.

Despite the potentially life or death stakes, identifying patients who could abruptly turn so violent is always an inexact challenge.

NAEMT found in 2005 that 52% of EMS providers have been assaulted in the field.

That means they are being assaulted on what they thought were safe scenes.

Its easy to say in a cold situation, “oh, well, they should have recognized something was wrong,” but that’s not always true. Human conflict is dynamic—it doesn’t always follow a set plan.

The basic of scene safety, however, are something providers should practice on every call. There is no guarantee that you’ll emerge unscathed, but they’ll maximize your chances.

Here are some law enforcement tips.

- The 90/10 rule—If 90% of a persons demeanor is calm and unthreatening, pay attention to the other 10%.

This may be a hand hovering subconsciously around a pocket (a tip off that it contains something they’re worried about, like a weapon or drugs) or some other almost imperceptible exhibitions of tension/anxiety.

- Parroting—Repeating your questions back to you (“What have you taken tonight?” What have I taken tonight?”) means they’re thinking about something else.

- Danger rooms—Keep people out of their bedrooms and kitchens when possible. these are often where weapons are.

- L formation—As one crew member faces a patient, the other should be positioned 90 degrees perpendicular from the patient. this will buy time if the patients attacks.

- Be aware of your surroundings and location.

- Be aware of your partner at all times.

- Be aware of egress routes.

- Be aware others know your location and activities.

- Remain in communications with EMD.

- Trust no one.

- Consider wearing body armor.

- Control patients access to their belongings and others after initiating care.

My brothers and sisters these are just some things I mention to keep us all safe and returning home to our loved ones, hope you enjoy this summer.

See you at the picnic!



REFLECTION OF HONOR

BY JEFF SAMERSON, *Executive Board Member*

When I came on this job, twenty years ago a co-worker was killed while standing at the bus stop in the Bronx and the EMT's and Paramedics at Station 36 (now Station 31) put on their green and white uniforms and carpooled to the Bronx to pay their respects to an M.O.S. that died. I felt so proud to be a part of people that respected and showed honor for each other. I didn't know his race, whether he was Italian or Irish, Puerto Rican or Dominican, I didn't know if he was a Paramedic or an EMT. I didn't even know how he died. All I know that he was a fellow co-worker who did the same job I did, had died. How many times have you watched the respect and honor firefighters and police officers have for their own? Is it limited to race, or nationality? Absolutely not. A Police Sergeant of Firefighter Lieutenant demands that the members off duty attend Funeral Services. Is that what's keeping you

from dusting off that class A uniform in the closet? I'm disgusted how selfish we have become. Your class A is free and you don't know where your tie is. You can't find your hat and \$2 pair of white gloves seems unaffordable.

An M.O.S. has died and you rather sleep or stay home and watch television. When I ask you, "Why weren't you there?" You act like you didn't see the death of a member update or hear the tones on the EMS radio! Selfishness always leads to loneliness. What should we say to the family member when they exit the church and barely anyone showed up to pay their respects? Should we say that you are angry and hate the job and you stayed home to prove the point? Your fellow worker has died. He or she went to the same academy, wore the same uniform, and wore the same patch that you did. Don't they deserve your respect for sacrificing their loved ones? Attend the funerals for your co-workers. What would you hope for at your funeral. I would hope for your respect.

GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT

BY JEFF SAMERSON, *Executive Board Member*

Glenroy Griffith is a 20-year veteran of EMS and is currently working full duty at Station 38 in Brooklyn, New York.

On the hot summer afternoon of August 1st, 2008, FDNY Paramedic Glenroy Griffith parked his car and began his routine jog around the loop of Prospect park. He returned to his vehicle at the end of his workout only to find it filled with black smoke. Clouds of smoke billowed out as soon as Griffith opened the door. He immediately called 911 for help. In a matter of minutes firefighters and police officers arrived to his aid. While firefighters were extinguishing the flames, a sergeant from the 78 pct looked on and stated, "Cars don't usually burn like that." Glenroy Griffith was placed under arrest and charged with arson. Police investigators found no matches, no cigarette lighters, no gasoline tank, nor any solid evidence that would place Griffith as a suspect. As he watched his car go up in flames and dripping with sweat from his run, police officers placed handcuffs on Griffith and detained him in a holding cell at the 78 precinct. Glenroy was heckled while he sat in jail and was accused of being an arsonist by the Sergeants, all because he believed, "Cars don't burn like that." Fire marshals found no accelerants that would cause a fire in the car. There was no conclusive evidence that an accelerant caused the car to burn

during a heatwave in the middle of a hot, sunny day. Glenroy was taken to Central Booking and released without bail. The Department of Investigations rushed to call the media and notified them that a paramedic from Brooklyn was arrested for arson. The FDNY's Bureau of Trials and Investigations suspended him for thirty days.

Legal fees cost Glenroy Griffith \$8,500.00. He had no income and resorted to using his children's college savings for his legal fees. Shortly after, Glenroy's medical coverage for him and his children stopped. Money was scarce and friends had to donate money for him and his children's survival. Bill collectors started calling regularly. The car insurance refused to pay for the car because the police report said arson. All of this, because of a hunch.

A month later, Griffith was given a restricted position at headquarters and ordered him to report to work at the time which he takes his children to school. He had to hire a neighbor to take his children to school.

Eight months later on March 10, 2009, Glenroy Griffith was found, not guilty by the criminal court and the entire case was dismissed. The union fought to get back pay returned from the suspension and all medical benefits restored and they succeeded. All of this happened because he dialed 911 for help and the police department had a hunch.

Visit us online at
www.afscme2507.org

MEC REPORT

(MEDICAL EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE)

BY RENAE O'CARROLL, *Executive Board Member*

Currently the MEC is currently in the process of making our recommendation to the department on the stair-chairs that were field tested in 2008. The two chairs were the ferno and the stryker; the recommendations are based on the field feedback forms and the presentations that were

given to the committee.

There are currently three cardiac monitors being field tested by our medics prior to a decision on a final one. The needless system is still being evaluated by the MEU prior to any final decisions. There is an assortment of topics on the MEU's agenda. I can be reached via the unions office or pager in reference to any questions pertaining to medical equipment.



Emergency Medical Dispatch VS Station 50 on July 5, 2009 in Softball

Pictures taken by Oren Barzilay



Wife & Son Of Lt. Brendon Pearson hold street sign re-naming in honor of Lt Pearson Station 23, Staten Island.



Meet The People—Members from Woodside Station (45).



Left to Right Recording Secretary Don Faeth, V.P. Izzy Miranda, Lobbyist Robert Ungar & Executive Board Member Oren Barzilay at the N.Y.S. EMS Memorial, Albany, N.Y.



NYS EMS Memorial, Albaby, New York.

Pictures taken by Oren Barzilay

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