



## **NAEMT Position Statement Public Safety Officer Benefits**

### **Statement:**

The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians supports extension of Public Safety Officer Benefits to all police, fire and EMS personnel who lose their lives providing emergency medical services as a public service.

Congress has established the "Public Safety Officer Benefit" program which provides assistance to the survivors of police, fire and ambulance staff employed by federal, state and local entities in the event of their death in the line of duty. This program is currently administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, US Department of Justice. An exception was made by the Justice Department after September 11, 2001, when eight non-governmental ambulance personnel were killed at the World Trade Center. In 2003 and 2008, bills were introduced in the US Congress to extend the benefits program to non-governmental (hospital-based, non-profit, and independent) ambulance personnel (emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nurses, doctors, drivers and pilots). However, these bills did not pass through committee.

### **Background:**

The Public Safety Officers Benefit program provides a one-time financial benefit to the eligible survivors of governmental public safety officers whose deaths are the direct and proximate result of a traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty. Disability benefits are also provided to public safety officers who have been totally disabled in the line of duty by a catastrophic injury, if that injury prevents them from performing gainful work.

According to the National EMS Memorial Service, approximately 400 EMS practitioners have died in the line of duty since 1993. While the total number of deaths differs significantly from year to year, the average number of practitioner deaths per year is 25 with about half of those having been employed by non-governmental agencies.

As of October 1, 2008, the death benefit is \$315,746. To expand this benefit based on an average of 12 line of duty deaths of non-governmental practitioners per year would cost approximately \$3.79 million per year.

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