



# EUROPEAN POLICYBRIEF

NO-FEAR



## "SCENE SAFER" – A NEW CONCEPT FOR SCENE SAFETY EVALUATION

Proposed methodology for scene safety assessment by first responders, and actions to be taken to improve their security.

May 2023

### INTRODUCTION

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel are not expected to act in scenes that are not secured (as per their standard procedures, they expect to wait for Law Enforcement to "secure the scene" before they intervene). Analysing current security related incidents, the trend is clear – EMS personnel are first at the scene, preceding Law Enforcement, with scenes so large and complex that it will take law enforcement many hours to secure the scene (a time frame which hinders life and limb saving care). In reality, EMS personnel are in the scene, attending the wounded, together with fellow citizens who initiated First Aid measures. There is a clear public expectation that EMS personnel intervene on the scene, and not stand back, yet EMS personnel have no training or structured way to analyse the safety and risks on scene.

### EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

Current EMS procedures dictate that personnel should not intervene if the scene is not safe. This is the procedure in place for daily responses to violence – law enforcement agents will arrive very rapidly to the scene, apprehend any perpetrator and create a secure perimeter for EMS personnel to attend the victims. Analysing security related incidents, this is not the case – EMS arrive to the scene before law enforcement, sometimes unaware of the fact that this is a security related incident (e.g. a traffic accident), and while fellow citizens are providing care to the injured. Those citizens, and the general public, expect that professional rescue services will attend immediately, and without any delay for victims.

In reality, this results in EMS personnel entering the scene, a scene which is by default "not secured" or declared as "controlled" by law enforcement. We could not find any EMS service with a concept of operations and a training methodology which provides a tool to the first responders on the field to assess the safety of different parts of the scene, and guide the actions to be taken. This is a gap in the preparation of EMS personnel to respond to security related incidents.

"SCENE SAFER" is a mnemonic, a memory aid for EMS personnel who find themselves on the scene of a security related incident, to assess the safety of different parts of the scene and take decisions:

SCENE - SAFER <i>I should consider</i>	
S	<p><b>Stop and Review the Situation</b></p> <p>En route what do I know or can find out. Slow down before arrival and stay far back enough for a safe initial assessment. Select a location for review. Note extent of the scene. Compare on-scene now with prior info.</p>
C	<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Overall situation in the country/region/area. Security Threat Level. Resources committed elsewhere. Type of Incident and the Hazards. Exact location (GPS) – See – Hear – Smell – Reported -</p>
E	<p><b>Emergency Services Present</b></p> <p>On scene or very close? Who &amp; where. How many? Already committed or available. Any Emergency Service Casualties. ETA for assistance and back-up - Who will lead EMS response.</p>
N	<p><b>Numbers</b></p> <p>How many persons at the scene - who are they – first impression of triage categories – friendly or not – any media present - vehicles present -</p>
E	<p><b>Entry and Exit</b></p> <p>Entry point by Foot or Vehicle – Exit point (s) – Initial Set-up point - Overlooked from height – overt/covert entry – reorientation after each task/interval – intact communications, voice/data – safe refuge.</p>

SCENE - SAFER <i>My 5 Questions</i>	
S <sup>1</sup> <u>Secure?</u>	<p><b>Q1:</b> How <b>SECURE</b> is the scene ? Never 100% secure but type of incident ? Weapons ? Time Now – Time to Backup – Daylight - Weather – Wind, speed and direction – Temperature – Smoke, fumes &amp; fire –structures stable. Casualties/Friendly/Panicked.</p>
A <sup>2</sup> <u>Actions?</u>	<p><b>Q2:</b> What <b>ACTIONS</b> could I take to make the situation more secure ? PPE? What Control Measures ? My priorities – what decisive actions on entry – sequence. Gain Information to maintain <u>and report</u> situational awareness.</p>
F <sup>3</sup> <u>Future?</u>	<p><b>Q3:</b> What happened – what’s happening now – what will happen next? Will my planned Actions change anything [ +/- ] in the <b>FUTURE</b> I anticipate ? <u>Key Action:</u> notify HQ of intentions /results.</p>
E <sup>4</sup> <u>Estimate?</u>	<p><b>Q4:</b> What is my <b>ESTIMATE</b> of the Situation now ? Could entry make the situation worse. My Threat Assessment - Credibility and Seriousness. Vulnerability - Low to High. What are my Courses of Action (Compare) Consult with Team(ate) <b>Go</b> or <b>No Go</b>?</p>
R <sup>5</sup> <u>Report?</u>	<p><b>Q5:</b> What can I now <b>REPORT</b> to my HQ? To other emergency services present ? As I gather more information should I <b>REASSESS</b> the situation – report &amp; reassess regularly</p>

## SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

This process is offered to EMS organizations for their consideration, adaptation to their reality (as needed in the local context) and use. Magen David Adom is already integrating the concept into trainings and procedures, and distributing keychain holders to personnel featuring the “SCENE SAFER” mnemonic.

NO-FEAR project partners will continue to offer their expertise and experience with implementation to interested parties, and can be contacted below.

## RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Additional research should cover board areas of investigation of the Safety Assessment for EMS professionals entering an unknown situation that could be unpredictable. This includes situations such as:

- Scene Safety assessment measures for EMS personal at incidents with terrorist type threats in play
- Infection Control measures for EMS personnel at incidents with a significant risk of the spread of toxic, infectious or otherwise hazardous materials
- Physical safety assessment measures for EMS personal at incidents in physically unstable environments such as earthquakes, building collapses, or fires both urban and wildfires.

Research parameters need to move beyond the organizational regulations and guidelines and consider the implication for individual team leaders faced with unsafe scenes. They should investigate decision making supports to aid EMS responders in their decision making at such unsafe scenes. This should include both the EMS professionals and the patients’ perceptions of safety in emergency medical services.

Means of improving actual situational awareness, tactics and techniques to aid the EMS responder and the EMS responders’ organisation in managing a situation need to be developed and understood.

This research can benefit from current work in the areas of PTSD in military medical personnel who have experienced situations where they were unable or prevented from utilising their EMS skill to the greatest possible extent.

## PROJECT IDENTITY

**PROJECT NAME** Network Of practitioners For Emergency medical systems and cRitical care (NO-FEAR)

**COORDINATOR** Francesco Della Corte, Università del Piemonte Orientale, Novara, Italy,  
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**CONSORTIUM** Albert Ludwig Universitaet Freiburg - Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris – Paris, France

Ayuntamiento de Madrid – Madrid, Spain

Health Service Executive HSE – Dublin, Ireland

Magen David Adom in Israel – Or Yehuda, Israel

Ministère de l'Intérieur – Paris, France

Ministerul Afacerilor Interne – Bucharest, Romania

Nederlands Normalisatie Instituut – Delft, Netherlands

Norges Rode Kors – Oslo, Norway

Rinicom Limited – Lancaster, UK

TFC Research and Innovation Limited – Dublin, Ireland

Trilateral Research Ltd – London, UK

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Waismed Ltd - Rosh Haayin, Israel

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**DURATION**

June 2018 – May 2023 (60 months).

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**BUDGET**

EU contribution: 3 495 957.50 €.

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**WEBSITE**

<https://no-fearproject.eu>

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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*This policy brief reflects only the author's view and the European Commission/REA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.*