# Chapter 48 Stress in Emergency Personnel

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# Abstract

Police, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency communications personnel, emergency department and critical care workers, and military personnel involved in life-saving missions are in high intensity and high-risk professions.

From the alert tones to the direct efforts to serve and save others, emergency operations personnel contend with a great deal of stress.

The rates of posttraumatic stress disorder in emergency personnel rival, and sometimes, surpass those of combat veterans. Stress impacts their personal and professional lives. Frequent exposure to traumatic stress contributes to marital and relationship discord, premature retirements, and excessive use of sick time. The psychological impacts of emergency services stress can also produce alterations in personality, chronic emotional distress, panic attacks, substance abuse and stress-related disorders.

There is obviously a need to provide a comprehensive, integrative, systematic, and multicomponent staff support program to alleviate distress in these populations.