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1st Responder Guidance for Active Shooter, IEDs

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Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Webinar

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# The InfoGram

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## Chemical Suicides: Risks to First Responders

In the past three weeks, two chemical suicides sent first responders to the hospital. In [New York](#), two police officers collapsed and almost passed out after opening a car door; 5 officers were ultimately treated. In [Massachusetts](#), four police officers and three EMS workers were hospitalized for respiratory problems after responding to an apartment.

Chemical suicides, also known as detergent suicides, are a growing trend in part because the instructions are readily available on the internet. Mixing easily-attainable chemicals produces a toxic gas which kills quickly in an enclosed space like a vehicle. An article on FireRescue1 talks more about PPE required for response as well as [scene decontamination and treatment of people exposed to the vapors](#).

In many chemical suicide incidents, the victim leaves a note for whoever will find them warning them of the danger. It is important to note this does not always happen or is not noticed. When faced with an unconscious person in a car, the first instinct is to open a door or break a window. This is what led to several officers being overcome by fumes in the New York case above. The suicide victim did leave a note taped to the passenger side window, but it was not seen.

It is important for first responders to take time to perform adequate scene safety and situational awareness, even if time is critical. Quickly walk around the vehicle to look for taped signs, look in the windows for chemical containers or chemical fog, and notice any faint chemical smell. Look for tape on the windows or vents. Review the [Chemical Suicide Training Package](#) at the National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center for more resources.

(Source: [National Hazardous Materials Fusion Center](#))

## 1<sup>st</sup> Responder Guidance for Active Shooter, IEDs

Active shooter events in recent years and the Boston Bombing in 2013 shed light on changing practices needed to improve the survivability of victims. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Health Affairs has released "[The First Responder Guidance for Improving Survivability in Improvised Explosive Device and/or Active Shooter Incidents](#)" to assist with this.

This first responder guidance provides evidence-based response strategies based on best practices and lessons learned from civilian and military improvised explosive

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device (IED) and/or active shooter incidents. Recommendations include:

- Early, aggressive hemorrhage control, to include tourniquet use;
- Personal protective equipment (which includes ballistic vests, helmets, and eyewear);
- Greater first responder interoperability and incident management.

The recommendations presented will help to save lives by mitigating first responder risk and improving the emergent and immediate medical management of casualties encountered during IED and/or active shooter incidents.

(Source: [DHS Office of Health Affairs](#))

## Volunteer Department Wellness Program Support

Health and wellness of firefighters is an important part of a volunteer department's safety program. Heart attack, obesity, and cancer rates continue to be a concern. These are almost always preventable health issues, and department leadership can support their firefighters by developing health and wellness programs.

For departments who don't yet have an active health and wellness program but feel they need to start one, there may be help. Through a Research and Development grant by FEMA, a project is in the works to test an online wellness program, and they [need volunteer departments interested in creating a wellness program](#).

This program is offered at no cost. Departments will be visited by the project team several times to determine health factors affecting members and individual firefighter data will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone. The program will allow departmental access to:

- The full online program;
- Individual health coaching;
- A summary of the department's report;
- Access to a nationally recognized team of fire service researchers.

(Source: [NVFC](#))

## Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Webinar

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is introducing a new webinar series for [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#) (AFG) applicants and award recipients. The new AFG Technical Assistance Webinar Series will be your opportunity to receive a briefing on the latest information to help prepare AFG applications and manage awards.

The first webinar is set for Tuesday, June 23 at 11 am. It will provide an update on changes in administrative requirements for AFG awards based on the recently adopted [Super Circular \(2 CFR 200\)](#), and an overview of Grant recipient responsibilities regarding procurement, competition, equipment, and record retention and more. This webinar features Ryan Corle from the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel.

Each webinar will provide up-to-date program information directly from AFG experts and ample time for the experts to answer questions from participants. The webinar will be through an [Adobe Connect session](#) and no preregistration is required. For audio transmission, the call-in number is 1-800-320-4330; the pin is #530853.

(Source: [AFG Program](#))

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