Leading Causes of Police Injury

Common workplace accidents among police officers include:

- Violence
- Falls, slip, and trips
- Overexertion
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Impact with objects or equipment
- Exposure to harmful substances
- Fires and explosions.


What I’ve seen...

- Shoulder injuries, for example, are common—not just from take downs during arrests, but they also occur in self-defense tactical training.
- Foot problems, like plantar fasciitis, sometimes show up after years of being on foot patrol.
- Lower back and hip issues are exacerbated by the weight of gun belts and vests worn for ten/twelve hours a day.
- Wrist and hand injuries from cuffing suspects, twisted ankles and knees from foot chases...
- The toughness effect can be a detriment to future medical issues, address it now, not later! Communication is key.
- Getting in and out of the car, hip issues...

Three types of injuries in the police world, according to a cop.

1. Injuries sustained not as a result of a police directed activity.
   - Getting shot, shoulder strain while effecting an arrest.
2. Injuries resulting from a directed activity.
   - Pushing a motor vehicle off of the road, slipping off of a wall, getting your ticket book thrown back at you, etc.
3. Motor vehicle injuries, non-pursuit (officers fault)
4. Motor vehicle injuries, non-pursuit (non-officers fault)
5. Motor vehicle injuries during pursuit (officers fault)
6. Motor vehicle injuries during pursuit (non-officers fault)
A Duke University Medical Center analysis found that obese workers filed twice the number of workers’ compensation claims, had seven times higher medical costs from those claims and lost 13 times more days of work from work injury or work illness than did nonobese workers.

But why?

Police Liability Claims
Policing in Missouri, Policing in the USA—
but this wouldn’t happen in my town:

• Consider the difference between a 30,000 pop town vs. a
sizable population town vs. a 120,000 town.

• Generally speaking, 2 cops per 1,000

• We all respond with to the same types of crimes, just on
a different interval.

MIRMA’s short survey: 8-10 CA’s, PC’s and
CC’s...

• PD Chief...

• Decrease physical contact injuries (i.e. use of force / suspect assaultive behavior / improper
demeanor as appropriate herein) increase aptitude on officer presence (i.e. physical appearance,
body language, etc.) and communication skills (i.e. de-escalation, diversion, persuasion, volume/pace
control etc.) and defensive tactics (i.e. reduce injury through competent skill applications, increase
proficiency with empty hand control and intermediate/impact weapon pain compliance techniques,
etc.)

• Decrease workplace accidents (i.e. vehicle crashes, improper process such as lifting/falling, lack of
awareness, etc.). Increase training safety and awareness on driving and workplace care and well-
being, increase policy enforcement and provide compliance incentives, etc.

• Provide and promote robust employee health and wellness program to increase vital organ
function, strength capabilities, proper dietary needs, and generally accepted lifestyle standards
expected by law enforcement officers (i.e. exercise, reduced alcohol consumption, overcoming bad
health habits such as smoking, etc.). This is probably the most important of all mentioned here within
as it will have a direct impact on decreasing all types of incidents that lead to worker’s compensation
claims by the very nature of the program.

Survey Cont....CA’s...
Survey Cont....PC's...

CC responses:

Tunnel Vision Can Kill: Train for it=Less Injuries and death.

- Police Chase Jeff City
Leading Causes of Police Death

Leading causes of fatal injury among police officers include:
- Homicide (murder)
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Pedestrian vehicular incidents, such as passing car striking a police officer who is standing on the road
- Accidental shootings.

Deaths of officers 2010 to 2019:

[Graph showing Felonious LODD's and Accidental Deaths]
Of the officers who were accidentally killed in the line of duty in 2019:

- 23 died as a result of motor vehicle crashes. Eight officers were responding to emergencies, 5 were patrolling, 1 was responding to a nonemergency circumstance, 1 was escorting a funeral or a dignitary, and 4 officers died in other types of motor vehicle crashes.
- 18 were pedestrian officers struck by vehicles. Five officers were performing traffic stops, 2 were assisting motorists, and 2 were performing traffic patrol. One officer was inspecting or investigating a vehicle crash. 1 was en-gaged in a foot pursuit, 1 was assisting or investigating a vehicle crash, and 1 officer was saving or rescuing a victim.
- 3 officers died in firearm-related incidents. One officer was performing an arrest, 1 was patrolling, and 1 was involved in another type of activity.
- 2 officers drowned. One officer was patrolling, and 1 drowned during a recovery operation.
- 1 officer was reported to have died in the category titled “an other type of duty-related accident” when he was struck by a tire/wheel while assisting a motorist.
The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) is maintained by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The FARS is currently the only database that contains detailed information on the fatal crashes involving law enforcement officers. The characteristics of law enforcement officers’ fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes were investigated using the FARS data from 1980 to 2006. The characteristics were analyzed at the crash level for 772 crashes that resulted in at least one law enforcement officer’s fatality, at the vehicle level for 776 police vehicles with law enforcement officers’ fatalities, and at the person level for 823 law enforcement officers killed in motor vehicle crashes.

NHTSA Study...

- Of the 584 officer fatalities that were investigated, 292 were traffic related. These included officers killed in automobile crashes, motorcycle crashes, and incidents where they were struck by vehicles.
- The highest number of deaths - 294 - occurred when officers were shot in unprovoked ambushes, while performing routine operations, serving warrants, and conducting follow-up investigative work.
- Of the 341 police officers who were killed while responding to dispatched calls, the highest proportion - 22 percent - died responding to domestic disputes.
- Officers who died after initiating contact with suspects were more likely to be killed during traffic stops, the study found.

Good for the goose, good for the gander...
Equipment Has a Right and Wrong Way

- Inquire with officers as to what they have.
- Look at what they have.
- Do you see labels, manufacturer names, helpful factual info?
- Do the officers know what the manufacturer recommends?
- Sometimes the process used by the manufacturer flies in the face of local norms or policies.

Other Areas of Injury: Applicant Testing. Two approaches to the physical ability test:

- The job simulation method
  As evident from its name, the job simulation method tests the ability of the applicant to cope with real-life situations. The reason is that police will be faced with realistic situations that require strength, endurance, and agility. The tests aim to assess whether the applicant meets the physical requirements for being a police officer. Examples include running a short distance, lifting and carrying a body, climbing stairs, and overcoming obstacles.

- The fitness-based method
  The fitness-based method involves testing a candidate's physical fitness level. Examples include the number of push-ups, 1.5-mile run, sit-ups, and hand grip strength. These tests are designed to assess overall physical fitness and strength, and they are intended to ensure that candidates can cope with the physical demands of the job.

Programs in existence to reduce police injuries/deaths:

- Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)
- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)
- Major City Chiefs Association (MCC)
- National Law Enforcement Officers’ Memorial Fund (NLEOMF)
- National Police Support Fund (NPSF)
- Concerns of Police Survivors (MISSOURI)
“Things that might help, too”

- Effect of CEW’s on police injuries?
  Policies on use of CEW have changed recently...
- BWC’s should help, right! Not necessarily...
  [link to article]
- LBV’s
  [video link]
- Police Explorers Programs
- Driving Schools, Driving Instructors, EVDK? Statistical Awareness...
- Desensitization to the importance of time.
- Hiring, Health, Counseling (Mental Health Related), Manpower, Training, Off Duty, contract with county.

Police Worker’s Compensation Claims-GP

Center for Officer Safety and Wellness
International Association of Chiefs of Police
Entry level testing, job task analysis, physical standards, job descriptions, etc.

Chase, AKA, Pursuit Policy

- Discretion vs Policy Driven
- What’s your city’s threshold for starting/continuing a pursuit?
- Tricky ones: DWI
- Analyze the policy and look for clarity regarding a black line, drawn in the sand, standard.
- UOF policy and UOF Reporting Policy!
Thank you for taking the time to learn about this area of concern. Police and all other departments deserve our attention and care.

Patrick Bonnot
Glenn Price
pbonnot@mirma.org
gprice@mirma.org