



COVID-19 RAPID Mental Health Assessment (RAPID) Webinar Series

Introduction to Total Worker Health®

Monday, September 25, 2023 | 12:00pm – 1:00pm EST

Zoom Webinar Registration Link:

https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FH34tf8LTLqj1k6TnYILBw

Abstract:

Three new manuscripts were recently published detailing results from the COVID-19 RAPID Mental Health Assessment (RAPID). RAPID measured the effects of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of first responders in 20 fire and rescue departments across the United States, including three large metropolitan departments. Quantitative and qualitative findings from the three respective papers highlight these effects, including the impacts on safety climate, organizational outcomes, mental health metrics, and work-life balance. Alongside Total Worker Health (TWH)® experts, the three lead authors from each RAPID manuscripts are presenting their findings as part of four-part webinar series. Members of the fire and rescue service, as well as occupational health and psychology researchers, scholars, and practitioners, are encouraged to attend. Because this research is pivotal in describing the burden of the pandemic on an already burdened workforce, the webinar series will work to amplify the need for policy, behavioral health, and staffing resources within the fire and rescue service.

Part I – The RAPID Study I

Monday, October 16, 2023 | 12:00pm – 1:00pm EST

Zoom Webinar Registration Link:

https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_WV9q4FVIQX6iaR1mvGI1Rw

Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on fire service safety culture, behavior and morale, levers of well-being, and well-being outcomes. Two samples (Stress and Violence against fire-based EMS Responders [SAVER], consisting of 3 metropolitan departments, and Fire service Organizational Culture of Safety [FOCUS], a geographically stratified random sample of 17 departments) were assessed monthly from May to October 2020. Fire department-specific and pooled scores were calculated. Linear regression was used to model trends. We observed concerning low and decreasing scores on management commitment to safety, leadership communication, supervisor sensegiving, and decision-making. We observed increasing and concerning scores for burnout, intent to leave the profession, and percentage at high risk for anxiety and depression. Our findings suggest that organizational attributes remained generally stable but low during the pandemic and impacted well-being outcomes, job satisfaction, and engagement. Improving safety culture can address the mental health burden of this work.

[LINK TO FULL MANUSCRIPT](#)

Part II – The RAPID Study II

Monday, October 23, 2023 | 12:00pm – 1:00pm EST

Zoom Webinar Registration Link:

https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0vUhooHzRmOcsQzwFQSYBg

Abstract:

The US fire service experienced increased demands due to COVID-19. This qualitative study explored the pandemic's impact on work-life balance and safety. Five interviews and 10 focus groups were conducted with 15 fire departments in the COVID-19 RAPID Mental Health Assessment. Coding and multilevel content analysis were conducted in NVivo. Four department support themes were identified: emotional/social (33.1%), policy (28.4%), instrumental (22.9%), and informational (15.5%). Four work-life balance themes were identified: life (51.2%), children (18.1%), physiological (16.5%), and work (14.2%). We observed more departmental resources to help mitigate job demands within the work environment compared with those for work-life demands. Job resources are needed to mitigate demands and improve safety culture and mental well-being of the fire service under normal conditions, and for the next pandemic, natural disaster, or long-term emergency.

[LINK TO FULL MANUSCRIPT](#)

Part III – Interplay Between Safety Climate & Emotional Exhaustion

Monday, October 30, 2023 | 12:00pm – 1:00pm EST

Webinar Zoom Link:

https://drexel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GZEOPWcJS1G4HSTibe4HZA

Abstract:

Various job demands continuously threaten Emergency Medical Service (EMS) first responders' safety and wellbeing. Drawing on Job Demands–Resources Theory, the present study examines the effects of the organizational context—safety climate—and the psychological context—emotional exhaustion—on safety behaviors and wellbeing over time. We tested our hypotheses in a longitudinal study of 208 EMS first responders nested within 45 stations from three fire departments in US metropolitan areas over 6 months during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Multilevel modeling showed that the relationship between safety climate and safety compliance behaviors can be attenuated when EMS first responders experience high emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was also negatively associated with morale while safety climate was positively associated with morale. Additionally, EMS first responders experienced increased depression when their emotional exhaustion levels were high. Higher safety climate was associated with decreased depression when emotional exhaustion was within a low-to-medium range. Higher safety climate was also associated with lower absolute levels of depression across the entire range of emotional exhaustion. These findings suggest that promoting safety climate and mitigating emotional exhaustion can augment EMS first responders' safety behaviors and wellbeing.

[LINK TO FULL MANUSCRIPT](#)