

NAME Position Statement re ME/C Personnel as First Responders (10/17/2025)

Many state and local jurisdictions have designated specific first responders as eligible for additional benefits (e.g. hazard duty pay) by virtue of their service and the risks it entails. Especially in pandemics, first responders are at risk of exposure when interacting with patients and the general public. In other emergencies, first responders risk exposure to hazards including, but not limited to, toxins, physical hazards, and dangerous weather conditions. Designated first responders may include emergency medical technicians, paramedics, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and medical care providers.

Medical examiners, coroners, and medicolegal death investigation personnel also face risks when responding to death scenes, transporting decedents, performing postmortem examinations, completing mortuary functions and maintenance, and handling and testing laboratory specimens.

The official position of the National Association of Medical Examiners is that if a locality or the federal government designates first responders to be eligible for benefits specifically because of their duties that involve exposure to any hazard, that analogous medical examiners, coroners, and medicolegal death investigation personnel be likewise designated as first responders for that purpose.