

**Heroism versus Professionalism in Disaster Rescue***Bruce Brink, EMA III, ALS II Airevac*

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Personnel directly involved in dangerous rescue operations often are confronted by a set of conditions that force radical departure from standard operating guidelines. These circumstances can result in actions that may be considered heroic, but because of lack of forethought, often result in injury or death. In time, if repetitive acts of heroism are condoned or honored, heroic behavior can become part of the culture of an organization.

Is heroism a desirable attribute in a professional who has repetitive exposure to dangerous critical incidents? A philosophical definition of "emergency" can assist response personnel in making the right decisions at the right time.

Is their emergency really your emergency?

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