

Two Discussions of Media

08/10/11 343 W - + 4 - 2

First is from statter911.com, titled [Media Relations Video: EMS Crew Member Tells Report Where to Go at Fire Scene in Coudersport, Pennsylvania](#). Dave loves those long title, and maybe there's a correlation with long discussion threads. That one's logged 93 comments since Monday's posting. And any Statter thread that exceeds 90 comments is certainly worth a look. The posting is about a fire scene video that opens with a confrontation between an EMS member and a news photographer.

The clip is a great learning tool and self-check for both responders and reporters. Both sides should watch the video and ask themselves "what's the best way to react in that situation?" What behaviors will arrive at an outcome that is effective in the short-term, and not problematic in the long-term? And for both sides? As for the discussion, maybe a third of the comments are about the issue of reacting to the press (and cameras in general) on scene. There's also a hearty amount of scene critique, volunteer bashing, and even some EMS bashing. Sigh.

Second is from Fire Law blog, which is a super site by veteran firefighter (38+ years) and attorney (26+ years) Curt Varone. The posting is titled: [Digital Imagery and Facebook Question: Off Duty](#). The issue relates to a fire department and a member who has taken scene photos off-duty (in police office role) and posted to Facebook. The question is from a fire officer, who is uncomfortable with that action. The answer is answers, with Varone addressing two points. First are the legal issues. Second are the leadership issues. A good discussion follows the posting. See what you think.

Both Statter and Varone appeared in a social media panel in Baltimore, and [my lame notes from same were posted yesterday](#). No small amount of irony there. Blogger blogging about bloggers speaking about blogging. If this were a movie, we'd be seeing a guy with a loud shirt at a computer, with mirrors in front of him and behind him. And showing reflections of reflections of reflections...

The EMS worker versus cameraman clip is also covered on the Pink Warm and Dry blog. That's an EMS blog. Good discussion on the clip and issue: <http://pinkwarmdry.com/2011/08/09/how-no..>

Then there's this new Statter story about a fire department using it's Facebook page to call out a\$\$hole drivers. One-off fluke, or are community standards a-changing? <http://statter911.com/2011/08/10/communi..>

Legeros - 08/11/11 - 07:33

I was glad to see PW&D get over her writer's block. It is a shame that so many public safety folks have forgotten about one of the greatest tenets of this country- freedom of the press. It's amazing how many stories there are and how often they pop up about local LEOs, fire folks, and EMSers who take it upon themselves to regulate the press. From the classic involving the Maysville (NC) FD, a WCTI camera crew, and a charged 1 1/2", to a Smithfield police captain and his run in with an independent photographer, to this one on the internet. Sure, we would like to see folks exercise what 'we' consider to be good taste, but that good taste is our opinion.

Me personally, the only gripe I have about the press being on scene and taking pictures is tha I am not very photogenic and they always seem to get my bad side on film.

PW&D points out, and pretty accurately, I think, what 'news' is and what is legal. Does that go against our beliefs sometimes? Sure. No matter what, we like to see the world through rose-colored glasses. That is probably the reasons behind some of the video footage that came back from the Viet Nam War and how they served to turn public attention against the war effort. There were even some images that came back from the South Pacific during WW II that shocked the public about what really happened when the Marines stormed ashore on some Japanese-held island.

There is a line, however, that some folks have not only crossed, but barged through. If a camera crew from WRAL or WTVD catches video of a

resuscitation attempt at Crabtree Valley Mall, it is news, and they are entitled to air it. They will probably edit it, but do they have to? They don't. They are not bound by HIPAA.

The problem comes from on-duty folks that get pics and video of the calls that they are on. There are all sorts of reasons for not doing this, HIPAA notwithstanding. You have to be careful about what you photograph and video, as many contributors of 'cool' fire scene video have learned the hard way. Sometimes the tactics pictured are 'less than well thought out'. Reminds me of a video that surfaced a while back of a wreck that occurred near here. While attempting to capture the drama and intensity of the moment, the photographer (themselves also an EMS provider) actually captured the final moments of a victim/patient bleeding to death, with numerous providers oblivious to the fact.

DJ - 08/11/11 - 10:41

Hit the send button too quick...

As to the Facebook call-out of wayward drivers... I don't know if community standards are changing, but I am not too much against this sort of thing. The reason? We have tried all sorts of things over the years-

1. Public service announcements that air at 3:00 in the morning.
2. A 'move-over' law that a lot of people have no idea what it is.
3. Laws on the books that it seems there is never the right person around when the violation occurs, and then, even when it does, I have watched LEOs ignore the offense.

Maybe an organized 'calling out' is what is in order. Maybe if we could get (or allow) WRAL, WTVD, or WNCN to place a camera on the dashboard of an ambulance or fire truck. But then, what would they see about some of our habits.

The problem is going to be that some of our emergency vehicle drivers also drive like a\$\$h*les.

But then, I am to the point I am all for them being called out in public also.

DJ - 08/11/11 - 10:47

DJ, question about cameras. Do you think the years of exposure to our local photogs (Lee, Legeros) and the posted results therein has made you (and other local responders) more comfortable around cameras? Press, personal, or otherwise?

Legeros - 08/11/11 - 10:57

Mike, I just take it in stride. I have adjusted the way I drive and the way I act in public because everyone has a camera, and with the advent of portable VHS cameras in the 80s, that has been the case. It is just too easy to snap a pic...even my Crackberry can record video. I can't speak for everyone, but I think they are better with it now.

We might as well just get used to it. It's a fact. Heck, we need to start using it to our advantage. That's the part we really haven't caught onto, yet.

DJ - 08/11/11 - 11:57

DJ, I'm in agreement with you on the Ladd FD Facebook post. I've conveyed my opinion through a few posts on Statter's site, so I won't clog up this blog with redundant remarks. I'm just glad to see that somebody else is open to the idea of...in the words of Ladd's Chief..."punching them in the face", figuratively of course, through more aggressive "call-outs" and less of the gentle, caring, rarely aired PSA's. Ok, I'm already repeating things I've said on Statter's blog, I'll quit before I start copy/pasting...

Lt. Lemon ([Email](#)) ([Web Site](#)) - 08/11/11 - 12:35

Name: (real name preferred)
 E-mail: (optional)
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/ [Textile](#)