

Story Idea: *First Responders and Epilepsy*

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Paramedics have been injured when trying to assist people experiencing seizures while police have injured, killed, or wrongfully arrested people having seizures. Yet, there are still no established protocols to aid EMTs in recognizing and responding to people experiencing seizures. In fact, many people believe common misconceptions and would try to administer first aid that is harmful to someone experiencing a seizure.

Avoidable injuries, deaths and wrongful arrests will persist unless action is taken to educate and train first responders.

Story Resources

- [Man in Police Custody Suffers Seizure and Dies](#) (*New York Times*).
- [Man says deputies assaulted him during epileptic seizure](#) (*Oakland Press*).
- [Twelve Key Points to Remember for an Effective Response to Seizures](#) (Epilepsy Foundation Web site).
- [Jeanne A. Carpenter Epilepsy Legal Defense Fund](#) (Epilepsy Foundation Web site).
- Collateral Materials (*available in both English and Spanish*):
 - a) *Seizures and First Aid*
 - b) *True or False: Fast Facts about Seizures and Epilepsy*
 - c) *Get the Word Out about Epilepsy*
- **The Epilepsy Index**, an educational Web resource for general epilepsy information, www.epilepsyfoundation.org/answerplace/index.cfm.

Suggested Interview Questions

- If someone experiences a seizure what should be done?
- How can you tell if someone is experiencing a seizure?
- What should NOT be done if you see someone experiencing a seizure?
- How can you tell if someone is experiencing a seizure?
- Is there any difference in seizure first aid for children, adults and the elderly?
- What are the different types of seizures, including generalized tonic clonic, absence and simple partial?
- What causes seizures and can they be prevented?
- What type of physician can treat epilepsy?

- Is there a difference between epilepsy and seizure disorders?

Fast Facts

- More than 3 million Americans live with epilepsy.
- Epilepsy affects people of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds.
- Every year, 181,000 Americans develop seizures and epilepsy for the first time.
- With proper antiepileptic medications, most people with epilepsy can lead normal lives full of everyday experiences such as driving.
- The condition can develop at any time of life, especially in early childhood and old age.

Interview Opportunities

- Eric Hargis, president and CEO, the Epilepsy Foundation.
- Sandy Finucane, vice president of legal and government affairs, Epilepsy Foundation.

About the Epilepsy Foundation

The Epilepsy Foundation, a national nonprofit with affiliated organizations throughout the United States, has led the fight against epilepsy since 1968. The Epilepsy Foundation will ensure that people with seizures are able to participate in all life experiences and will prevent, control and cure epilepsy through services, education, advocacy and research. For additional information, please visit www.epilepsyfoundation.org.