

**HOW COPS DIE**



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# HOW COPS DIE

Understanding and Preventing Duty-related Deaths

*By*

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## PREFACE

Working in law enforcement is not for the faint of heart. The job is intense and involves constant physical threats and hazards. It is a workplace like no other. Employees perform their duties while wearing ballistic vests and armed with a wide variety of weapons intended to fend off attacks and to protect the lives and safety of others. While it is not the deadliest occupation in the United States, policing is a dangerous profession.

As time passes and the service stripes on our arms get longer, we become more accustomed to violence, physical threats, and the possibility of death. Many become numb to the danger and relax into the job environment. This numbness is only intermittently disrupted by the moments that remind us of the risks of the job. We find ourselves headed to a call where the odds are stacked against us. We take on homicidal or suicidal individuals, knowing that they place no value on our lives. We rush onto unstable scenes that involve fire, hazardous chemicals, or live wires. We battle with individuals who are covered in blood or who have hypodermic needles on them, thereby risking the contraction of communicable diseases. We arrive, survive, and move on. These experiences are filed away and are revisited in future tales of life on the job. Those who have these stories and walk away unscathed are the lucky ones. We all know that calls go bad quickly and “routine” calls can turn deadly in seconds.

Although we endure extensive academy training, receive ongoing in-service training, and fulfill our annual or biannual firearms and defensive tactics requirements, few officers invest time or effort studying other ways that they can stay alive on the job. Heavy emphasis is placed on physical combat, and few officers realize that there are much greater risks to our safety than other people trying to kill us. In truth, we are our own worst enemy. We have reached a point in time in the United States where officers are more likely to die by accident or by suicide than by an intended attack. Yet, we devote little energy to examining this and to looking to find ways to reduce our risks.

This book reveals the truth about duty-related deaths based on the most recent statistical data. It addresses traffic accidents, police homicides, physical

fitness, and mental health issues including officer suicide. Individual chapters address specific threats to officers and are followed by a chapter that details successful strategies to combat those threats. It is an action-oriented, solution-oriented book on police health and safety. At the end of each chapter that includes tiered safety strategies, a summary of those tactics is provided as a quick reference guide for readers.

The intention of this book is to provide readers with an overview of the complexities of the real threats to the lives of police officers in the United States and the methods to effectively combat them. Today's law enforcement personnel should take the time to understand and adopt these strategies that will contribute to living longer and preventing serious bodily injury. The burden of these strategies falls on the shoulders of street-level officers, middle managers, and upper administrators. All have the power to positively impact the health and safety of today's police officers. The responsibility is everyone's. The contributions that each member of a department makes are all small pieces of a greater whole. The hope is that those who understand the true threats to today's law enforcement personnel will be able to make the necessary changes needed to improve every police officer's chances of living a longer and healthier life.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Preface</i> .....	v
<i>Chapter</i>	
1. Officers Killed in the Line of Duty, 2010 .....	3
<b>Part 1: On-Duty Deaths</b>	
2. The Numbers: An Overview of On-Duty Deaths .....	41
3. The #1 Killer: Traffic Accidents .....	49
4. Preventing Traffic Deaths: Successful Strategies .....	62
5. The #2 Killer: Police Homicides .....	77
6. Preventing Police Homicides: Successful Strategies .....	83
<b>Part 2: Duty-Related Deaths</b>	
7. Employee Physical Health: Beyond Foot Chases and Fights .....	107
8. Improving Physical Health: Successful Strategies .....	121
9. Employee Mental Health: Seeing the Big Picture .....	139
10. Maintaining Good Mental Health: Successful Strategies .....	157
<b>Part 3: Administrator's Guide</b>	
11. Developing a Comprehensive Wellness Program: Departmental Assessments .....	171
12. Working Toward Wellness: Getting a New Wellness Program Off the Ground .....	181
13. Employee Morale: The Root of Safety and Wellness .....	189





**HOW COPS DIE**



## Chapter 1

### OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY, 2010

**B**efore discussing the risks to police officers and the strategies that can be employed to reduce those risks, it is appropriate to first consider actual cases of officer deaths. These are real people. These individuals worked in small towns and in big cities. Some of them were rookies and some were seasoned veterans. Some were responding to domestic disturbance calls and others were engaged in “routine patrol” duties. Now, these fallen officers are banded together by one thing: they all gave their lives in service to the communities that they served.

The following is a complete list of fallen officers who died in the line of duty in 2010, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP) ([www.odmp.org](http://www.odmp.org)). It includes their department information, as well as a brief summation of the events surrounding their deaths. It should be noted that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) releases a yearly publication titled, “Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted.” The data from the FBI’s 2010 publication includes statistics that vary slightly from the ODMP’s list. This variation is likely related to different reporting protocols and/or the definitions of on-duty deaths (such as a heart attack) or of a law enforcement officer (such as a correctional officer). Although the statistics do not perfectly align, the summary of officer deaths provides an excellent overview of how officers are dying in the line of duty.

January 1, 2010

**Police Officer Maylond Thompson Bishop, Jr.**  
Guntersville Police Department, Alabama

Sixteen years prior to his death, Officer Bishop responded to a domestic disturbance involving a man who shot his wife. Upon his arrival, Officer Bishop was shot by the suspect with one round that missed his vest and struck his spine, causing him to be paralyzed. He experienced ongoing medical problems until his death on January 1, 2010. Prior to his death, he had served five years with the Guntersville, Alabama, police department.

January 3, 2010

**Deputy Sheriff John Mark Bernard**  
Grant County Sheriff's Office, Washington

Deputy Bernard was on routine patrol when his vehicle left the roadway and crashed. He was found dead at the scene. He had served four years with the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

January 4, 2010

**Special Deputy Marshall Stanley W. Cooper**  
U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Marshalls Service

Special Deputy Cooper was working at the federal court house in Las Vegas, NV, when a lone suspect entered the building and opened fire with a shotgun. Cooper died as a result of his wounds. He had served as a court officer for 16 years and had served 26 years with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

January 5, 2010

**Deputy Sheriff Josie Greathouse Fox**  
Millard County Sheriff's Office, Utah

Deputy Sheriff Fox had conducted a car stop of a vehicle that was connected to a car theft investigation. Shortly after stopping the vehicle, she requested backup. When backup arrived, she was found shot in the neck, just above her vest. She had served with the Millard County Sheriff's Office for five years.

January 9, 2010

**Corporal James John Szuba**  
Mishawaka Police Department, Indiana

Corporal Szuba was operating his patrol car with his canine partner, Ricky, when their cruiser was struck by a drunk driver who was being pursued by another officer. Both died at the scene. He had served seven and a half years with the Mishawaka Police Department.

January 9, 2010

**Correctional Officer Edward Pounds**

North Carolina Department of Correction, Division of Prisons,  
North Carolina

On November 17, 2009, Officer Pounds was attacked by an inmate and sustained serious injuries. He died nearly two months later as a result of these injuries. Officer Pounds had served three years with the North Carolina Division of Prisons.

January 11, 2010

**Police Officer Alfred Louise Celestain, Sr.**

New Orleans Police Department, Louisiana

On January 8, 2010, Officer Celestain was en route to a call with his partner when a drunk driver ran a red light and struck their cruiser. Officer Celestain died two days later as a result of injuries sustained in this accident. He had served with the New Orleans Police Department for 21 years.

January 12, 2010

**Trooper Duane Allen Dalton**

Louisiana State Police, Louisiana

Trooper Dalton was on routine patrol when his cruiser was struck by another car, which caused his vehicle to be pushed off the highway. He was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He had served with the State Police for 15 years.

January 12, 2010

**Police Officer Frank M. Bolusi**

New York City Police Department, New York

Officer Bolusi responded to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centers in 2001 and participated in the rescue and recovery efforts. During his time at Ground Zero, he inhaled toxic chemicals, which led to his death a decade later. He had served with the New York City Police Department for 17 years.

January 13, 2010

**Police Officer Craig Gordon Story**

Arlington Police Department, Texas

Officer Story was operating his motorcycle with lights and sirens activated. When he proceeded through an intersection, he struck the side