

Officer Safety Concerns

AMBUSH ATTACKS

During the past several years, there has been an emerging trend in felonious law enforcement officer deaths as a result of ambush confrontations with armed individuals.

Most encounters officers make are with law-abiding citizens, but unfortunately officers may be faced with encounters that are unexpected and dangerous.

While not every law enforcement crisis can be averted and no officer is totally immune to ambushes, officers must train to be alert and sharpen their situational awareness during their tours of duty.

Entrapment vs. Spontaneous

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines ambush confrontations in two forms: entrapment and spontaneous, each with differing characteristics.

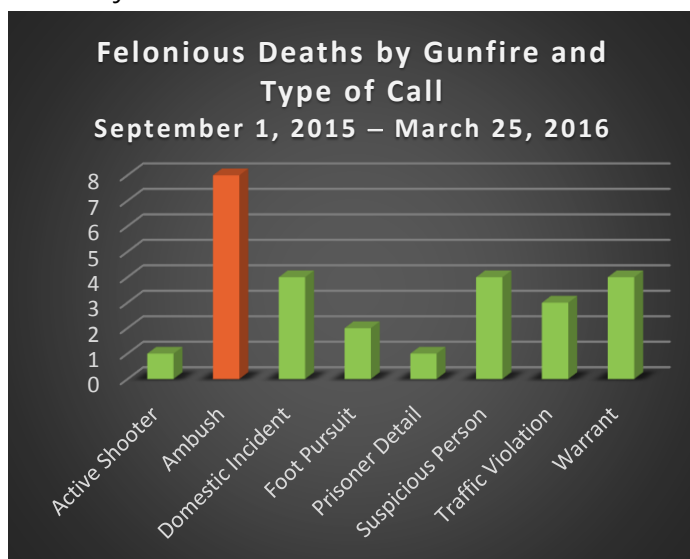
- **Entrapment ambushes** are premeditated events that require pre-attack planning.
- **Spontaneous ambushes** are unprovoked attacks in which the perpetrator has little or no planning.

ALL AMBUSHES have similar characteristics that define them:

- Element of surprise—The officer has no indication that the attack is imminent, or the attacker may be unobserved by the officer.
- The offender has concealed his or her location, intentions, or weapon.
- The attack is sudden, with few, if any, pre-attack behaviors on the part of the offender.
- Lack of provocation.

Over the last six months, eight officers have been killed as a result of an ambush. The most recent ambush attack occurred this year, on March 1. An officer from the Euless, Texas, Police Department was ambushed after a suspect, having just stolen several firearms during a burglary, lay in wait in a drainage ditch to attack responding officers. The officer from the Euless Police Department was the second law enforcement officer killed as a result of an ambush attack this year; the first was an officer from Danville, Ohio, on January 17.

From September 1, 2015, to March 18, 2016, there were at least **53 ambushes**, where **22 officers** were injured and **3 officers** were killed.



*Graphic depicts that ambushes were the leading cause of officer line-of-duty deaths covering the period of September 2015 through March 2016.**

“Being *mentally* and *physically* prepared for situations is a key component of officer safety and wellness.”



Ambushes are almost impossible to predict, but **training** and **awareness** on the part of the officer can greatly increase his or her chances of survivability.

Remember your training.
Remember A.M.B.U.S.H.

Awareness—Between September 2015 and March 2016, eight officers were killed in ambush attacks.

Mentally Prepare—Prior to arriving at any call, mentally prepare for whatever you may encounter at the scene and have a plan to deal with it.

Be Prepared to Act—Train for every possible ambush scenario, and be prepared to stop any threats.

Use Proper Tactics—Evaluate all situations as you approach.

Survive the Encounter—Stay tactically proficient and keep physically fit to help you survive every encounter.

Help Others—To help others, you must help yourself. Slow down and get yourself under control.

Bureau of Justice Assistance VALOR Initiative presents Ambush Online Training

This VALOR training module was created in response to the ambush-style assaults that have led to the injuries or deaths of many law enforcement officers in recent years. This training is designed to give officers tools to help prevent and react to ambush attacks.



Start training today by visiting
<https://www.valorforblue.org/Home/VALOR-Training/Online-Training>
and logging on to the VALOR Web Portal.

Resources:

[*Officer Safety Corner: Protecting Officers from Ambush Attacks: Key Insights From Law Enforcement Executives*](#)

Published by *The Police Chief* magazine

[*Department of Justice Releases Report on the Ambush of Police Officers*](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of Justice

[*Ambushes of Police: Environment, Incident Dynamics, and the Aftermath of Surprise Attacks Against Law Enforcement*](#)

Published by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

[*Ambush Fact Sheet*](#)

Published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police

*Statistics used for graph on page 1 provided by the [Officer Down Memorial Page](#) and other open sources.

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