



Cole Zercoe

Policing in the 21st Century

Reader poll: Cops' increasing role in providing medical care

This month, we asked our readers a series of questions about the medical gear they carry, the training they've received and the lifesaving measures they've taken on the job

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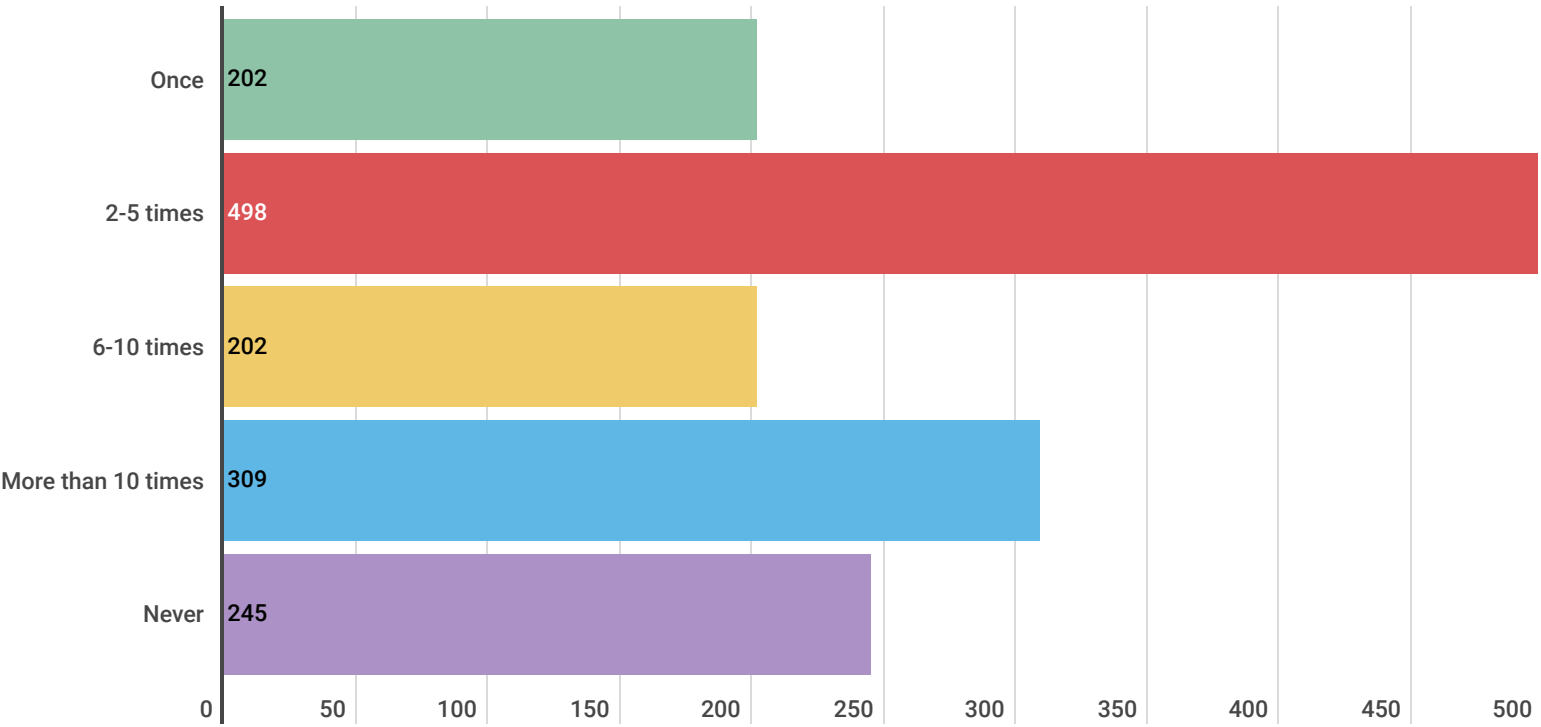
This information comes from recent PoliceOne polls. Polls are updated on the P1 homepage each month and open to all P1 readers. Make your voice heard [HERE](#) in our latest poll.

From handling mental health calls to being on the frontlines of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the responsibilities of the modern police officer are constantly evolving and expanding, going well beyond the traditional position of law enforcer into areas such as social work.

The most prominent example of this is arguably in the area of healthcare; as the nation grapples with challenges such as the opioid crisis, agencies are increasingly recognizing the role cops – often first on the scene of a health emergency – can play in saving lives.

This month, we asked our readers a series of questions about the medical gear they carry, the training they've received and the lifesaving measures they've taken on the job. Here are the results:

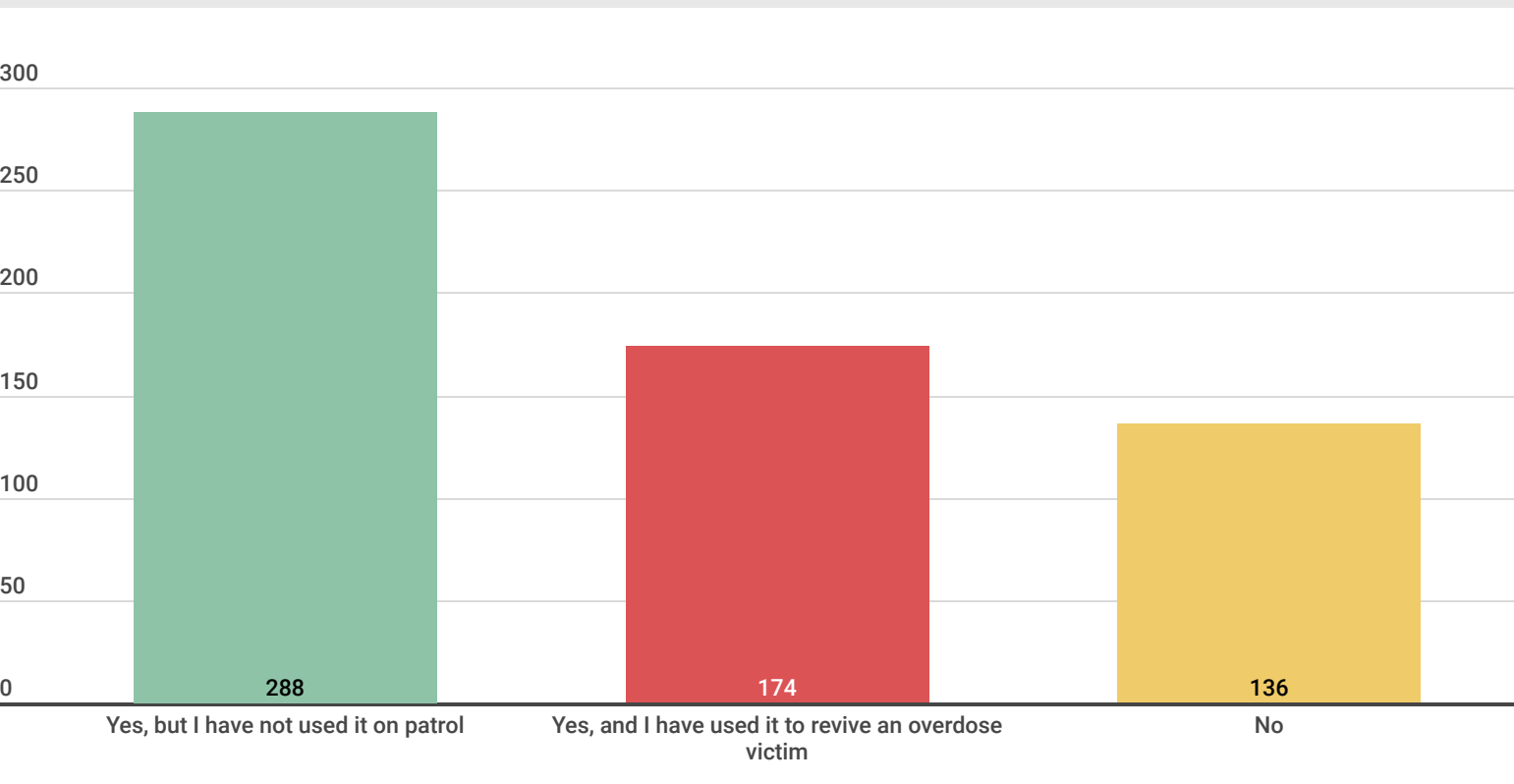
How many times have you performed CPR while on duty?



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Has your agency equipped you with naloxone, often referred to as Narcan?

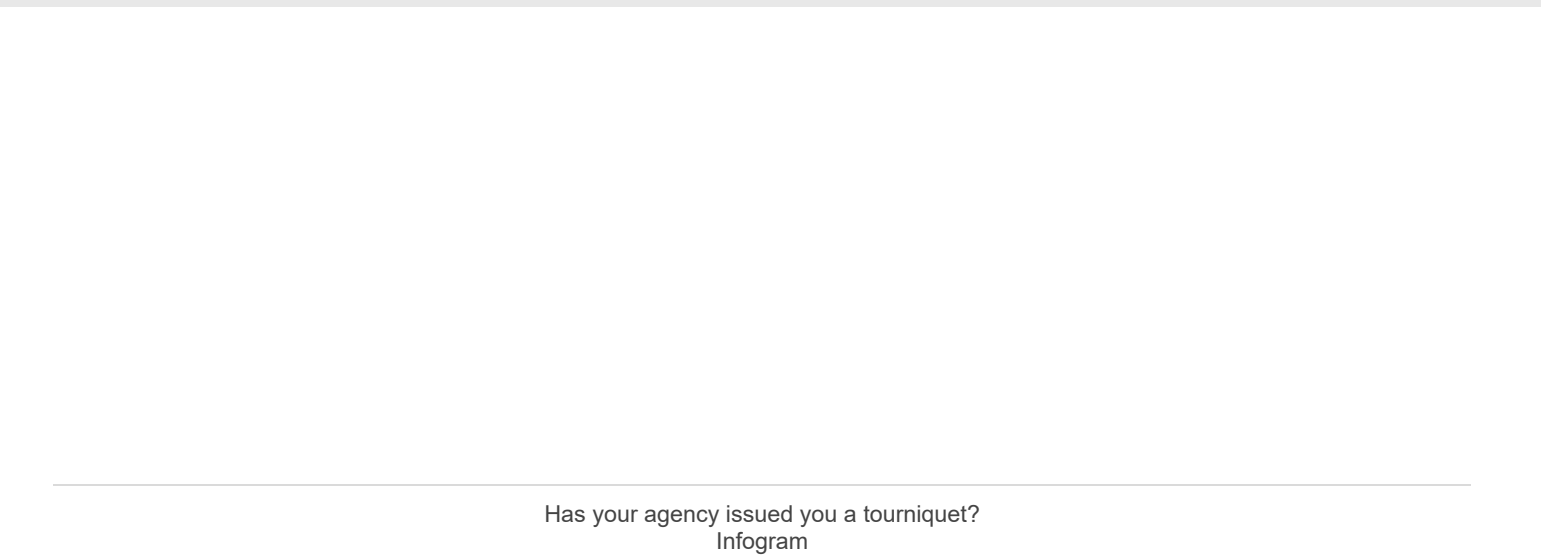


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Has your agency equipped you with naloxone, often referred to as Narcan?
Infogram

Has your agency issued you a tourniquet?



What is the highest level of medical training you have received?

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Infogram

As you can see, the results suggest that cops are indeed playing an increasing role in providing medical care. Only [17% of respondents](#) have never performed CPR while on duty, the majority [carry naloxone \(77%\)](#) and [tourniquets \(94%\)](#) as part of their gear, and [58% have received first aid/CPR certification](#), while 31% have undergone EMT training.

Here's what our readers thought about their increased role in providing medical care in the field:

"As a police officer and an out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest survivor (who had CPR/CCR done on me by my wife and a fellow police officer), I'm pleased to see this data on law enforcement cardiac response," reader and [P1 contributor Brandon Griffith](#) wrote. "I've been in law enforcement over a decade and don't know many officers who haven't done CPR in the field. Police continue to be the most underutilized component of the chain of survival (not being equipped with AEDs and not receiving high-quality cardio-cerebral resuscitation training). This poll highlights the need for enhanced law enforcement cardiac response that would increase survival in an unprecedented way."

Our readers [shared stories](#) of attempts not only to save civilians but fellow officers – an important reminder that lifesaving gear and training is as much an officer safety issue as it is a public safety issue.

They also weighed in on the source of their medical gear, with some sharing that their tourniquets came free via the 1033 program. Others said their agencies [got naloxone from state health departments](#) or universities at no charge.

For those who weren't provided a tourniquet from their department, many purchased their own. Some commenters argued that [all cops should carry one, and it's foolish not to](#).

"I can't understand why any LEO wouldn't have taken it upon themselves to have always carried a trauma kit. Common sense," Richard Johnson wrote.

What's your take on providing care in the field? Should agencies be doing more in terms of providing gear and training? Are cops being asked to do too much? Tell us in the comments and read the following articles to learn more:

[Opinion: Increase cardiac arrest outcomes by updating police dispatch protocols](#)

[Why all cops need first aid and CPR training](#)

[What police should carry in an opioid response kit](#)

[Winning the war on opioids: How law enforcement is creating pathways of care](#)

[A review of tactical tourniquets](#)

About the author

Cole Zercoe is the Senior Associate Editor of PoliceOne and CorrectionsOne. From the latest police technologies and innovations to the emerging threats cops face, his award-winning features focus on the complexity of policing in the modern world.

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