



US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**BLAST INJURY RESEARCH PROGRAM**  
**COORDINATING OFFICE**

## Protective Equipment

### Use of Rigid Eye Shields at the Point of Injury

As part of an on-going effort to educate and improve compliance, the Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) developed an instructional video on the use of rigid eye shields, "Shields Save Sight." This video<sup>1</sup> placed third<sup>2</sup> in the "Internal and Public Information" category at the Defense Media Activity Department of Defense (DoD) Visual Information Production competition<sup>3</sup> - the highest level of competition for video production within the DoD. The outreach was extended from military medical providers to civilian trauma providers and included target audiences of medical providers of all levels, Service Members, and members of the civilian trauma community. The video has been incorporated into the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care All Combatants curriculum as well as the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians pre-hospital care curriculum.<sup>4</sup> In addition to publicizing the instructional video, VCE continued to emphasize the need for rigid eye shields at the point of injury by presenting at the Eagle Creek breakout/pre-meeting of the 2016 A Gathering of Eagles Annual Scientific Symposium, the annual meeting of the Directors of State and Metropolitan Emergency Medical Services Systems.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the presentation, VCE emphasized that there is currently no national requirement for civilian ambulances and emergency vehicles to stock or carry rigid eye shields, resulting in a lack of ability to properly mitigate eye injuries at the point of injury. Primary examples of the impact of this gap included the Boston Marathon blast and the West, Texas explosion, both of which created ocular injuries in numbers similar to those seen in military combat. Despite a 12-14 percent rate of eye injury, only one shield was placed. As a result of the presentation, national ambulance stockage lists and recommendations will soon be changed to include rigid eye shields.

- 1 Defense Information School. "3rd Place Internal/ Public Information: Shields Save Sight." Online video clip. YouTube. 12 May 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WugOPoQT1w>
- 2 Defense Media Activity. (2015). Visual Information Production Award Winners. <http://www.dinfos.dma.mil/Portals/66/Documents/About/Awards/VIPA%20201520Winners.pdf>
- 3 Defense Media Activity. Defense Media Awards. <http://www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards/>
- 4 National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians. TCCC-MP Guidelines and Curriculum. [https://www.naemt.org/education/TCCC/guidelines\\_curriculum](https://www.naemt.org/education/TCCC/guidelines_curriculum)
- 5 Mazzoli, R. A. (2016). Rigid eye shields to mitigate eye injuries at the Point of Injury (POI). Presented at the A Gathering of Eagles Annual Scientific Symposium of Emergency Medical Systems, Dallas, TX.

