

# Do we need self-defence and which martial arts for self-defence?

By Morné Mommsen, Midvaal Fire and Rescue and Warrior Combative



**Emergency service members need to get regular training in some kind of self-defence system**

This article does not come easy and hopefully I don't offend anyone. This is not the first time I am talking about self-defence for emergency members. This conversation already comes a long way and I even suggested 'Self-defence for emergency service' as the theme for the past Southern African Emergency Services Institute (SAESI) conference in 2017. A scary fact is that most senior management and provincial government members take note of this problem and on a regular basis it was indicated to them to start with some kind of training programmes to train emergency member to take care of them self in different criminal situations.



**Two TFT Crossfire monitors has been fitted with a TFT Master Foam self-inducing nozzle**

The 300-litre foam tank is manufactured from heavy duty polypropylene and is treated with a non-slip paint to accommodate the heavy wear and tear to which it is exposed to. The tank is fitted with an electronic contents level gauge.

Two all-aluminium hose trays are provided, one on either side. The left side hose tray accommodates three 100mmx30m supply line and the right hose tray six 65mmx30m attack lines.

Additional items that formed part of the vehicle specification are:

- 4 500kg electric front mount winch
- All stainless steel nudge bar
- WiFi camera to capture the incident
- Rear LED work light
- Emeduvac emergency lighting and siren system with LED flashes
- Step lights all round
- Reflective signage
- MSA mini self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Thunderstorm C801 1x3 Premium foam

The fire apparatus division of Advanced FST in Alberton was responsible for the manufacturing and conversion process. Both units will be deployed at NATREF in Sasolburg. 



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We must stop blaming each other and the system and start to act. On a regular basis we read some article with regards to "Emergency services being the target of criminal activities or emergency members being assaulted by criminals"; What a scary thought and even as this continue you will get some members of the emergency services who will state I can protect myself, but reality is that "everyone has a plan up to the point when you are hit in the face".

Some organisations now state that emergency service members need to carry firearms. Nice, I am a firearm expert and instructor but please explain to me how you will be able to protect your firearm if you busy with a patient or standing with a spreader in your hand. Sorry you can't protect your firearm and how many of you that do have a firearm, can really use it in a combat situation, I mean physically be able to use it. Many will become an expert with regards to a YouTube video or as experts will call them, YouTube Warriors. As someone who has been in the martial arts long enough to understand this and who has 28 plus emergency service years, I feel I should share this.

Emergency service members need to get regular training in some kind of self-defence system. I represent Warrior Combative who specialises in Krav Maga System, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Self Defence Course designed for the purpose of defending yourself against the reality on the street. It takes hard work and dedication to be able to defend yourself and I can promise you nothing comes easy. But in today's world of mixed martial arts, civilian self-defence courses, military combatives and an overall 'new' approach to self-defence by people who 'think outside the box', I can tell you, there is much confusion by people new to the martial arts world as to what exactly is the best approach for them. Many seek different things in martial arts, however, one thing they seem to have in common is self-defence.

Which style is best? Asks the typical inquirer, hoping to get an answer similar to, "Style A because it..." either has ..... (insert advantage)

or because style B lacks ..... (insert disadvantage.) In reality, such an answer is a mere misconception. All martial arts have their benefits. And all martial arts (not combat sports) share one goal in regards to self-defence and that is to neutralise or otherwise negate or incapacitate a violent threat, before it turns into a fight.

"But which martial art is better." You may reply. The answer? None! What? That's right. A martial art is nothing more than a set of skills one acquires and learns.

Which recipe is better? The recipe you can cook better.

Which tool is better? The tool you know how to use better.

Which hat song is better? The song you can play better.

Which subject in school is better? The subject you were taught better.

Which martial art is better? The martial art you were taught better. The martial art you can use better because you were taught better. The martial art you understand better. A martial artist is only as good as their instructor and the person using it. I stated before that martial arts are sets of skills you learn.

This is correct. One may type into the YouTube search engine, "Style A vs Style B" and this I find as pure silliness. Martial arts don't fight. Only martial artists do. The person who has a better understanding of the sets of skills they are using wins, not the set of skills themselves.

If you take many high-level martial artists, they will have a similar response to the same scenario.

That is because they are all using arts and concepts that were created by human beings and for human beings; whether that was centuries ago or this morning. So hopefully you can see now that martial arts are not on a pecking order of the most effective to least effective. They are simply relative to how we use them.

As mentioned, I represent Warrior Combative, who focusses on Krav Maga styles such as AIKMA (Israeli) and KMCS (German) Systems and also have written permission from the

founder to implement and teach an NFPA approved self-defence course designed for emergency responders. As an individual, I also participate full time in Shidokan Kick Boxing and I can guarantee anyone that this is not easy. But to be able to defend yourself, you need to step up. It does not help you to arm yourself if you are not properly trained. I am not against firearms as I am an advance tactical firearm instructor and love weapons but this is a last resort option for any member of a service. I merely state that you need to start with the basics and work your way up to success. Just a question, what if your opponent gets hold of your firearm or overpowers you? This will/ or can happen because of lack of knowledge and skills. 10 shots in a piece of paper don't make you an expert and there is a huge difference between static shoot and real life combat shooting.

You need to concentrate on awareness programmes, communication skills, basic stances, target areas, how to plan escape routes, how to control the fight and flight effects and if all fails, one-on-one fighting skills, multiple attacker fighting skills, knife fighting skills, firearm skills and so much more and remember, nothing in life is for free or comes easy.

On so many occasions training programmes and skills development with regards to self-defence for emergency members was sent and introduced to various departments and entities. Everyone always says "Wow" or "What a good idea" or "We must make this a priority". For how long do you want to make it a priority and don't act or must we wait until the first one is killed or raped or missing.

If interested in any form of assistance please contact us via email:  
Gauteng: dnaemergency@gmail.com  
Meyerton: davidkies.dk74@gmail.com  
Cape Town: p Vogts1@gmail.com

Best of luck with your training!

This is the first of a series of articles discussing self-defence for first responders written by Morné Mommsen. Please heed this advice and act on it. 