

## Austin-Travis Co. EMS leaders: Medics fear for their own safety downtown

by Melanie Barden  
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*Austin-Travis County EMS vehicle. (CBS Austin)*

Austin-Travis County EMS officials say medics are fearing their safety after an [increase in violent crime downtown](#).

According to Selena Xie, president of the Austin-Travis County EMS Association, overnight crews have reported higher rates of verbal harassment on calls.

“It has definitely been a lot scarier for our medics,” says Xie.

In the past two weeks, they've responded to four shootings and noticed an increase in gang activity downtown. Xie says the rash of crimes have also put a strain on resources as more ambulances are forced to respond to calls downtown, away from their respective stations.

“Now that we see an uptick it actually is taking away ambulances from other areas of the city,” says Xie.

According to data from 2017, ATCEMS has 36 24-hour ambulances and 6 12-hour ambulances. In July alone, they responded to more than 11,000 calls.

Currently, there are only two ambulances serving the downtown area -- determined to be the busiest in the county.

“They'll do over 20 calls a day easy,” says Xie.

Xie tells CBS Austin two medics are travelling to Dallas in the coming weeks for defensive training.

The goal is to eventually train all medics how to defend themselves if they get harassed while out on a call.