

**It's Women's History Month and NEMSQA is recognizing and celebrating the women leaders serving on the Board.**



**Brooke Burton, NRP, FACPE** is the Quality Improvement Specialist for Falck in Alameda County, CA. She also serves in many other roles in the EMS industry including Vice President of the NEMSQA, President-elect of the National EMS Management Association, liaison to the NASEMSO Prehospital Pain Management Evidence Based Guidelines project, a member of the ET3 project Technical Expert Panel and faculty for the Fitch and Associates Ambulance Service Manager Program and the NAEMSP Quality Course.



This long list of positions and leadership roles seems to prove that EMS and her instructor made the right choice in calling Brooke to this field!

**Why did you choose to go into EMS?**

*I didn't choose EMS, I think EMS chose me! I grew up loving theater and wanting to do something in the arts for a career. I decided to take an EMS course to do seasonal work at a ski resort while attending college. One of my instructors saw something in me and asked me to come to work for the local ambulance service. From my first call, I never looked back! EMS has been my life ever since.*

**Why do you think it is important to have more women in leadership roles in EMS?**

*I believe EMS personnel and leadership should reflect the populations they are serving. Since women are approximately 50% of the population, we should strive to have equal representation of that demographic in our workforces. This principal does not just apply to women, but all minority groups as well. EMS services, like our great nation, can thrive on diversity and the knowledge and empathy we can obtain from different perspectives.*

**What qualities do you think make a great leader?**

*I feel the best leaders practice servant leadership, meaning a leader's goal is to serve the interest of both their crews and customers. Listening and empathy are at the heart of servant leadership, so great leaders have to be curious and keep an open mind. Emotional Intelligence is also a factor I have found as a common trait in the leaders I respect the most. The topic of Emotional Intelligence in EMS is gaining traction, and I hope to see more work done around this in our industry.*

**What's the most important piece of advice you'd give to a woman thinking of starting a career in EMS?**

*My advice to women or anyone else starting a career in EMS is to surround yourself with people you find most inspiring. Don't be afraid to be in a room or in a discussion that is above your current level of expertise...that is how you learn! One of my biggest problems early in my career was "Imposter Syndrome" or feeling like I wasn't smart or good enough to take a leadership role. If you don't get over those feelings, you will never grow! Set stretch goals, try new things, and don't be afraid to fail! I have learned some of my greatest lessons from things that didn't work out the way I had expected.*