

Memorandum



Date: November 12, 2010

To: Mayor Pro Tem Dwaine Caraway, Chair
and Members of the Public Safety Committee

Subject: Evolution Of EMS In Dallas

The Public Safety Committee will be briefed on the Evolution Of EMS In Dallas on Monday, November 15, 2010.



Ryan S. Evans
First Assistant City Manager

Attachment

- c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Dallas City Council
 - Mary K. Suhm, City Manager
 - Deborah Watkins, City Secretary
 - Tom Perkins, City Attorney
 - Craig Kinton, City Auditor
 - Victor Lander, Administrative Municipal Judge
 - Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
 - A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
 - Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager
 - Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer
 - Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager Mayor/City Council Office

EVOLUTION OF EMS IN DALLAS

Eddie Burns, Sr., Fire Chief
Emergency Response Bureau
November 15, 2010

PURPOSE

- In the past year we have initiated a program that will:
 - Allow for Advanced Life Support (ALS) to be delivered from each Fire Station on each Engine Company.
 - Redistribute the workload among Rescues and Engine Companies.
 - Reduce the run load on Paramedics assigned to Rescues, thus reducing “burn out”.
 - Provide a transition pathway for Paramedics to move from Rescues to Fire Engines.

DALLAS FIRE RESCUE

Dallas Fire Engine



Dallas Rescue



DEFINITIONS

- EMT: Emergency Medical Technician. Trained to provide Basic Life Support (BLS) such as CPR, bandaging, splinting, obtaining a pulse and blood pressure.
- Paramedic: Trained to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS).
- ALS: Advanced Life Support, such as starting IV's, intubating patients, monitoring and treating heart rhythms and providing Drug Therapy.



HISTORICAL

- EMS program began in 1972:
 - Dallas was one of 3 major US Cities to initiate an EMS program.
 - Prior to 1972 the Emergency Medical Service was provided privately through local Funeral Homes.
- 16 Ambulances were placed among our 45 Fire Stations.
- These Ambulances were staffed with Dallas Firefighters certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's).
- In the first year of service the Ambulances responded to 40,249 incidents.

HISTORICAL

- In 1974, EMT's were trained and certified as Paramedics:
 - These Ambulances became known as MICU's. (Mobile Intensive Care Units).
 - Paramedics were assigned to the fire stations housing an MICU.
- When Paramedics had enough seniority in the EMS system they could decertify, be removed from an MICU and then be assigned to a Fire Apparatus.
- Fire Apparatus may have had a Paramedic assigned but were only able to provide "Basic Life Support" (BLS).

HISTORICAL

Pre (CAD) Computer Assisted Dispatch and Pre (GPS) Global Positioning System.

- Dispatch decided which Apparatus to send based on station locations. Capability to know the exact location of Department equipment did not exist at that time.
- Late 1970's (CAD) Computer Assisted Dispatch was instituted in the Fire Communications Center enhancing the ability to accurately send the proper equipment.
- BY 1985 the City of Dallas had 22 MICU's assigned among our 53 Fire Stations. They responded to 73,974 incidents.

HISTORICAL

- Mid 1980's- Peak Demand MICU's were placed into service to assist with the EMS workload of the MICU's.
- In the early 1990's, the (GPS) Global Positioning System was installed on DFD emergency equipment.
 - Mobile Data Terminal (MDT's) were placed on each MICU. This allowed Paramedics to see run data that the Dispatchers possessed while responding.
 - GPS also decreased “response times” by allowing the closest equipment to be assigned regardless of where they were stationed.

ENGINE RESPONSE

- Since the inception of the initial EMS program, Dallas Engine Companies have been dispatched to assist with EMS.
- A Dallas Engine is dispatched on the following EMS situations:
 - Heart Attack/Chest Pain
 - Unconscious Person
 - Stabbing
 - Shooting
 - Major Accident
 - Any EMS run where CAD shows the Rescue to be further than 6 minutes away.



ENGINE RESPONSE

- Until 2010, Engine Companies may or may not have had a Paramedic assigned.
- If the Engine Company had a Paramedic assigned, they were only able to provide Basic Life Support (BLS). There was no ALS equipment placed on the Engine Companies, such as IV's, Drugs and Intubation Equipment.

2010

- Since 2001, MICU's are now called "Rescues".
- There are currently 34 front line Rescues assigned among our 55 stations plus 11 peak demand rescues.
- In FY 09/10, the demand for EMS services has increased to 149,610 incidents.
- A pilot program had Paramedic Engines at 3 stations.

NEXT PHASE

- All 54 Dallas Engine Companies will have the ability to provide “Advanced Life Support”.
- Every Fire Station in Dallas with an Engine Company will have a Paramedic assigned to it at all times. The exception being Station 21 at Love Field Airport where no Engine Companies are assigned, only Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Equipment is stationed.
- DFR began staffing these Engine Companies in early Summer 2010.
- There will be at least one Paramedic assigned to each Engine company on every shift by the end of November 2010.

NEXT PHASE

- Paramedics are now being reclassified into Paramedic “A” and Paramedic “B” categories. Paramedics can voluntarily transition from one category to the other.
- Paramedic “A”: Assigned to a Fire Station with a Rescue and will be assigned to a rotation on the Rescue.
- Paramedic “B”: Assigned to an Engine Company and are no longer assigned to a rotation on the Rescue.

ALS ENGINES

- There is now at least one Paramedic on each Dallas Engine Company at all times.
- The 21 Fire Station's without a Rescue will have a Paramedic assigned to the Engine Company.
 - Members are no longer required to decertify as a Paramedic. Their skills and experience are retained and utilized as a Paramedic "B".

ALS ENGINES

- Are equipped with Advanced Life Support equipment, drugs and an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED).



- Every Fire Station in Dallas will have a Paramedic assigned to the Engine at each station.

PRIORITY DISPATCH

- DFR will implement a Priority Dispatch system by July 2011.
 - The Medical Directors Team will develop a Priority Dispatch program.
- Incidents that have a low acuity and transport rate, now can have an Engine only assigned.
- This will allow the Rescues to remain in service for higher acuity calls.
- This will also result in improved response times for the Rescues.
- Both the Medical Director and Dallas Fire Rescue will periodically monitor and review our data to assure that our resources are delivering the most efficient EMS possible. The process will continually be refined in order to achieve our goals.



ADVANTAGES

- A Paramedic will arrive first at every EMS incident that has a Rescue or Engine Company dispatched.
- Redistribution of workload
 - Rescue's can be “cleared” and placed back into service sooner, thereby allowing them to have quicker response times to more serious emergencies.
 - Reduction in Paramedic “stress and burnout” by reducing Rescue responses.



ADVANTAGES

- The Rescue's in Dallas will have a lower Unit Hour/Utilization Ratio (UH/U) than previous years.
 - Based on the EMS Vision Process, the Dallas UH/U ratio was among the busiest in the country.
- Improved Response Times.
- A paramedic on scene at each emergency incident.
- Will achieve the EMS Vision Process Goals:
 1. To improve the working conditions and morale of our members providing out-of-hospital medical care.
 2. Improve the quality of emergency medical care provided to the citizens of Dallas and...
 3. To work with our partner agencies in and around Dallas to improve the function of the EMS System.
- The goal of the EMS Vision Process was to develop a plan to assist and enable DFR to achieve its goal of becoming the best fire-based EMS agency.

SUMMARY

- This program has been accomplished within budget by restructuring the amount of money paid to paramedic “A”s and “B”s.
- This money was used to purchase the equipment that has been placed on the Engine Companies.

SUMMARY

- DFR continues to provide the best possible care at every emergency in the City of Dallas.
- The Department is able to balance the workload among the Paramedics and Firefighters.
- There is now a process for a member to transition off of a full time Rescue to an Engine Company.
 - We are able to do this without losing the training, knowledge and experience of the Paramedic.



QUESTIONS?

