

FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Service Description

Eugene's Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department provides 24-hour professional, community-based fire suppression, rescue, special hazard, and EMS services to life-threatening situations, along with emergency preparedness, prevention and education services from 11 fire stations (including the Airport Station, which is accounted for in the Airport service profile) and other support facilities located throughout the service area. First response services are provided to all City residents, and by contract, to several adjacent fire districts outside of Eugene. Ambulance transport services are provided in coordination with Lane Rural Fire/Rescue and Springfield Fire and Life Safety to an area of approximately 3,000 square miles of central Lane County. By contract with the State, Eugene Fire and EMS also provides hazardous material response team coverage to all of Lane County. Also provided to the community are specialized rescue services including technical rope, trench, excavation, building collapse, confined space, and water rescue.

Additionally, the department provides fire, accident and injury prevention and education services including presentations, training sessions, safety planning and inspections, juvenile fire setter interventions, and fire investigations. By Charter, the agency also supports the Toxics Right-to-Know Program, giving public access to annual reports from local manufacturers and users.

Historic Perspective

1872 Fire services formally organized as the first City department.
1913 First gasoline-powered fire truck purchased.
1948 Bond levy passed to improve citywide alarm and hydrant systems.
1957 Labor campaign successful in reducing workweek from 72 to 56 hrs.
1981 Department forced to assume paramedic ambulance transport service for community after sudden closure of private provider.
1985 New system receives national *Paramedic Service of the Year* award.
1986 Fire and Police consolidated into Department of Public Safety.
1995 Fire redeployment bond levy approved by voters with 67% majority.
1997 Given Insurance Services Office *Class 2* rating, highest in Oregon.
1997 Fire and Police de-consolidated back into separate departments.
1999 Moved into new Sheldon and Whiteaker fire stations, and the City's Emergency Services Center campus as part of Fire Redeployment.
2001 Department begins multi-phased EMS Redesign project.
2002 Fire and EMS crews assigned to interim Santa Clara station.
2003 *Standards of Response Coverage* risk analysis completed.
2004 Department applies for National Accreditation.
2005 New Downtown and Santa Clara fire stations opened.
Department receives National Accreditation.

2006 Department appoints new Fire Chief.
2007 New 3-division organizational structure implemented.
New 3-Battalion integrated response system implemented between Cities of Eugene and Springfield.
2008 Department provides medical and hazard materials response to 2008 Olympic Trials.
Sacred Heart Hospital opens an additional location in Springfield.

Citizen Involvement

Annually, both Eugene City Council and Budget Committee review the Fire and EMS Budget. The Toxics Review Board provides policy direction to council on the implementation of the Toxics Right-to-Know Program. In collaboration with the Medical Control Board, the department's Physician Advisor reviews and makes recommendations regarding the provision of emergency medical and ambulance transport services.

Customer Input

Major sources of customer input are received from contacts with citizens, visitors, businesses, contractors, vendors, neighborhood organizations, Medical Services Questionnaire, department web site, the City's Community Survey, and periodic reports to the City Council, Mayor, City Manager and the Public Service Office.

Mission

To serve our community by protecting and preserving life, property and the environment through prevention, education, medical, rescue, and fire suppression services.

Outcomes

- Safer community through effective prevention and public education.
- Level of response reflects the Standards of Coverage risk analysis.
- Effective apparatus and equipment configuration meets response needs.
- Stability of ambulance transport services in service area with adequate response and transport capacity.
- New operational efficiencies within service community.
- Good relationships with neighboring jurisdictions and agencies.
- Training and professional development prioritized.
- Needed infrastructure development and logistical support available.
- Organizational excellence is promoted and documented.
- Strong inter-departmental relationships
- Strong internal relationships.

Operating Principles

- We strive to accomplish our vision, mission and goals through teamwork, partnership, open communication, and shared recognition of success.
- We demonstrate through words and actions our commitment to be responsive, respectful and sensitive to the community and our workforce.
- All interactions with the public and with co-workers are conducted in a forthright, professional and courteous manner.
- Personnel are highly competent, well trained, equipped, and prepared to respond effectively and in a timely manner to emergency situations.

Current Operating Environment

External Trends

Expanding Regulatory Environment

The current regulatory environment contributes significantly to the need for increased training, personnel and equipment capacity. Changes in State and Federal reporting requirements, mandated training, professional standards, OSHA workplace and emergency scene procedures, and hazardous material handling requirements all mean significant new, unfunded costs to the organization. Adequate resources must be made available to continue the department's ability to provide for the public's safety, while ensuring consistent compliance with all relevant regulations.

Coordinated Ambulance Transport Services

Eugene, Springfield and Lane Rural provide paramedic ambulance transport throughout central Lane County. National changes in reimbursement and local service district reconfigurations have brought a number of challenges to this formerly stable service area. A number of strategic responses have been implemented, or are being analyzed by local provider agencies.

- In 2009, the department anticipates signing a contract with a non-emergent transport agency to transport non-emergent, inter-facility patients.
- Emergency medical calls to the 911-dispatch center are now being triaged using medical priority dispatching protocols to insure that the appropriate resource is dispatch to the emergency.
- Continued refinement of the local model for public ambulance service provision including researching new revenue sources and reviewing opportunities to reduce expenditures, with the goal of long-term sustainability.

Hazardous Materials Management

The manufacturing, use and storage of hazardous materials in and around Eugene are growing. This increases the potential for a serious incident to occur here. In response, Fire and EMS became one of Oregon's regional

teams, and the City assumed the ongoing responsibility of ensuring that assigned staff are adequately trained and equipped to meet the need.

The community's Toxics Right-To-Know Program, which has been in place since 1996 continues to provide detailed information regarding hazardous substance use by manufacturers to the public. Action by the Oregon Legislature restricted the options available for funding the program with user fees as directed in Charter language. The number of Eugene manufactures required to report to the program has declined from 53 in 1998 (the initial reporting year) to 36 in 2008 due to economic and production related reasons.

Homeland Security

The national initiative to increase the country's overall level of preparedness for incidents involving terrorism has produced pressure to expand the department's capabilities in the area of specialized rescue. One example is Fire and EMS's selection as one of Oregon's new technical rescue cache points. Although many sources of federal money are now available, these funds are not predictable and do not guarantee ongoing funding. Additionally, these grants normally carry a requirement that matching funds be committed by the provider.

Increased Growth and Density

The type of growth the area has experienced has served to increase service demand without increasing the general revenues available to fund additional resources. Meanwhile, traffic congestion, new calming strategies, and a decaying transportation network have combined to slow Fire and EMS responses. Additionally, the change in location for Sacred Heart's primary medical center has increased travel time to and from the hospital in an already constrained system.

Special Districts

The passage of limitations on the assessment of property taxes in Oregon has forced all public agencies to consider a variety of new strategies for maintaining an intact service system. Fire and EMS is a service area that many communities, including Eugene, are evaluating for possible annexation into existing special service districts. This is a complex issue that carries significant financial implications for any municipality looking to affect this type of change. If Eugene continues to be interested in pursuing this strategy, it will merit considerable study.

Internal Conditions

Crew Preparedness and Capacity

Fire and medical personnel are required to possess the skills to operate a broad range of equipment, and to handle a wide range of emergency

situations. An enhanced training program has been implemented which targets baseline skill maintenance, and seeks to effectively address new areas of expertise required by demand. Additionally, Cities of Eugene and Springfield have entered into an agreement, 3rd Battalion, which insures greater resource availability along the Cities' borders as well as an increase in surge capacity. As call volume and training requirements increase, Fire must maintain an effective workforce, and manage increased reliance on City resources by neighboring rural agencies.

Technological Changes

The metropolitan partners have jointly funded the replacement of the area's aged AIRS system with a new CAD. The Eugene and Springfield Fire Departments are also cooperating in implementing a medical electronic charting software program that will allow electronic capture of pertinent patient information as well as be integrated into the billing system, streamlining current practices. In 2009, the department will begin looking at updating the mobile field-based computing resources located in each fire apparatus as well as research options for an integrated records management system. While vital, these integrated endeavors will also require considerable resources to implement, and ongoing costs to maintain and for future replacement.

Risk Management

Fire and EMS recently updated their comprehensive community risk analysis process, reported on in the Standards of Response Coverage document. Documentation of controlled substance handling and procedures regarding blood borne pathogens are in place. Efforts to address the earthquake vulnerability of fire stations have been met with the construction of a new Downtown Fire Station and the systematic upgrade other facilities. Water runoff issues have been mitigated with the upgrade of the storm water systems at all facilities and the use of the Live Fire Training structure at the City's Emergency Services Center.

Strategic Plan

The Fire and EMS Strategic Plan sets forth the priority work and initiatives of the department for a specified four-year period. It is our over-arching goal to create an organization that is receptive to change and always seeks to improve the services it delivers to the community. Several key elements of the current plan include:

- Expand community outreach including delivering key prevention messages to high-risk, target audiences (e.g., children, elderly, and those with special needs).
- Refine and stabilize the Ambulance Transport Fund to preserve the high quality of service provided by the ambulance transport system available in the community.

- Maintaining National Accreditation as a key measure of overall organizational performance.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that represents the communities Fire and EMS serves.
- Develop and maintain collaborative strategic partnerships.

Performance Measures

Core Processes

Emergency Response and Mitigation

- Average response time from dispatch of unit(s) to arrival on scene.
- Number of total call responses for Fire and EMS resources.
- Number of commendations and complaints.
- Average time operating on scene, by specific call type.

Prevention and Education

- Number of citizens reached through educational programs/offering.
- Number of visitors touring fire stations and other department facilities.
- Percentage of clients that complete, without criminal recurrence, the juvenile fire-setter intervention program.

Total System

Effectiveness

- Average response time from dispatch to arrival of first fire unit in minutes.

Efficiency

- Response reliability percentage by fire station district.
- Number of sworn personnel in department, per 1000 of City population.

Customer Satisfaction

- Percentage of Community Survey respondents who rate Fire and EMS services as above average or excellent.
- Percentage of Department generated Emergency Medical Service survey respondents who rate medical response as above average or excellent.

Strategy 1: Design the department's medical first response and ambulance transport systems to effectively meet the growing demand for service as well as identify new revenue sources and cost efficiencies to create a sustainable program given current ongoing revenue reduction projections and personnel resource issues.

Objectives: Ensure that Ambulance Transport Fund revenues meet or exceed 100% of Fund expenditures through FY14.

Ensure response times for transport calls fall within the target range identified in the Standards of Cover analysis.

Work Activities:

- Continue to review/refine the dynamic staffing model of transport units.
- Implement automated *pro QA* dispatch for all 911-received medical calls.
- Develop new cooperative agreements with transport system partners.
- Contract with non-emergent ambulance provider to provide non-emergent, inter-facility transports.

Strategy 2: Develop regional deployment and operational strategies for Fire and EMS resources in response to community growth and changes in service environment.

Objective: Ensure that station response reliability and average response times fall within accepted standards.

Work Activities:

- Maintain annual update to the Standards of Response Coverage report.
- Maintain National Accreditation process.
- Complete station location study for far west and south Eugene.
- Research grants for additional training props including a Command Training Center.

