



First Responder Program

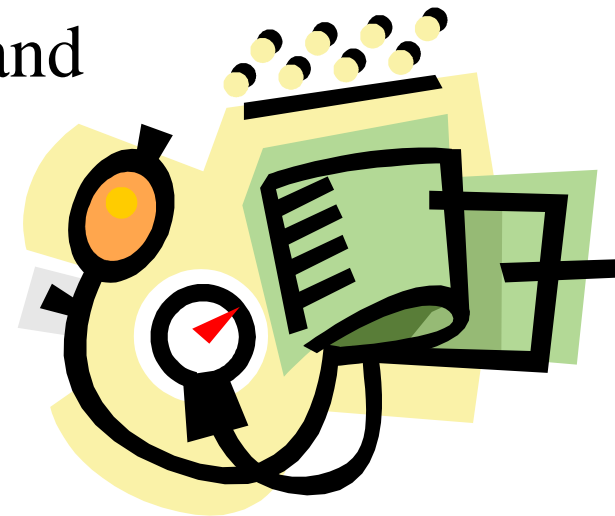
What is the First Responder Program?

- "First responder organization" means a group or association of certified emergency medical services personnel that, working in cooperation with a licensed emergency medical services provider, provides immediate on-scene care to ill or injured persons but does not transport those persons..



What is the First Responder Program?

- First Responders Organizations (FRO's) are individuals or organizations which:
 - Routinely respond to emergency situations
 - Utilize personnel who are emergency medical services certified by the Texas Department of Health
 - Provide on-scene patient care; and
 - Do not transport patients



What is involved in becoming a First Responder Organization?

- 1.) the application;
- 2.) a personnel list to include social security number and certification/licensure level;
- 3.) description or map of service area;
- 4.) agreements with appropriate licensed providers; and
- 5.) nonrefundable application fee, if applicable.

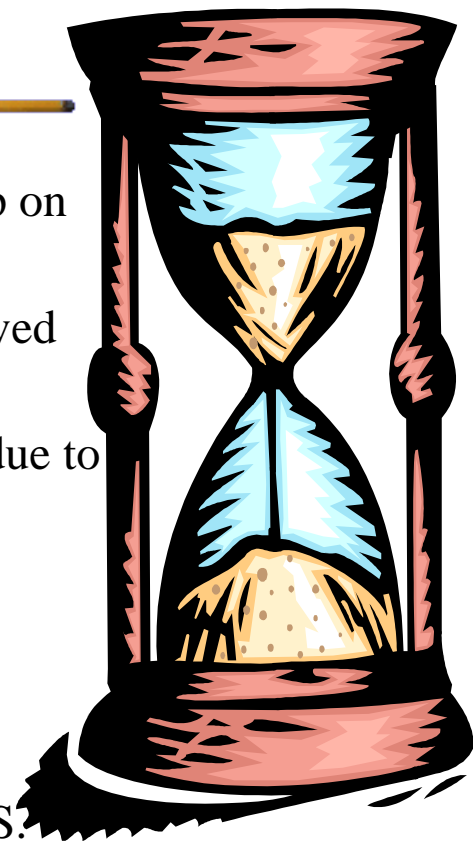
Currently.....

Firefighters often arrive on scene before E.M.S, lack of basic E.M.T. training severely limits their ability to offer medical assistance and must wait until ambulance arrives.

- Reasons why firefighters arrive to scenes before E.M.S.
 - a.) Due to ability to respond from 3 Fire Stations located in different parts of city, often arrive before E.M.S. (which must respond to entire city from a single location).
 - b.) E.M.S. resources are tied up at other calls.
- Public perception that firefighters are trained to offer medical assistance often apparent when firefighters cannot begin medical treatment & must wait for EMS to arrive.

Cases in point....

- Recent Fire Department agility tests, man collapsed. E.M.S. tied up on other runs...arrived approx. 10 minutes later.
- Rescued child from locked vehicle, E.M.S. called. Ambulance arrived approx. 2-3 minutes later.
- E.M.S. requested Fire Department respond to medical emergency, due to resources tied up at other calls. Woman experiencing diabetic emergency. Fire Department assisted as much as able until E.M.S. arrived approx. 10 minutes later.
- Vehicle stopped at Central Station with overdose victim who had stopped breathing. E.M.S. called arrived approx. 2 min later.
- Arrived at fire scene to find man who had stopped breathing. E.M.S. arrived 2-3 minutes later.
- City employee collapses at Council Chambers, fire department personnel in attendance, lack equipment and training to assist.
- City employee suffers heart attack, firefighters on scene lack training and equipment to assist.
- Firefighters pull little girl from burning building...E.M.S. arrives <1 min later.



Many, many other assistances where firefighters lack of equipment and training limited greatly their ability to assist in medical emergencies.

Currently.....

Only medical emergency calls Fire Department responds to are those where E.M.S. require Fire Department to perform other tasks, such as extrication, other rescue operations, and calls where assistance is needed in moving and/or loading patients.

- Fire Department does not respond to other medical emergency calls, unless specifically requested by E.M.S.



As First Responders.....

Firefighters trained as E.M.T.'s with proper equipment and supplies on Engine respond and are able to begin treatment upon arrival.

- Also dispatched to other medical emergencies besides those where extrication, rescue, and assistance moving / loading patients.

Benefits to community....

- Properly trained and equipped firefighters are able to begin medical treatment of patients any time that such action is necessary, without losing precious time waiting for ambulance to arrive.
- Greater number of individuals trained as E.M.T.'s in community means that during emergency events involving mass casualties, the capacity to handle such events is also greatly improved.
- 40+ trained E.M.T.'s from Fire Department available either on or off duty to respond when necessary.
- Fire Department personnel able to stand-by at events (such as sporting events) where injuries frequently occur. Limitation of current E.M.S. resources sometimes prevents these activities.
- Equipping Fire Engines with A.E.D.'s will be a tremendous benefit to community.
 - Automated External Defibrillator (AED) - An electronic medical device approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration which is capable of recognizing the presence or absence of cardioventricular fibrillation or rapid cardioventricular tachycardia; is capable of determining, without interpretation of cardiac rhythm by an operator, whether defibrillation should be performed and, on determining that defibrillation should be performed, automatically charges and requests the operator to deliver an electrical impulse to an individual's heart.

Reasons for First Responder Program

1.) It is **NOT** an attempt by the Fire Department to take over EMS.

2.) It is **NOT** in any way meant to make a negative statement about or cast a shadow of doubt on our current EMS provider. We believe Val Verde Regional Medical Center EMS to be highly professional and extremely competent...probably among the best in the state.

It **IS** about two agencies working together under a program which will, when established, enhance emergency medical services for the greater good for the citizens of this community and establish more trained EMT personnel for increased resources when needed.

Fire Department E.M.T.'s without First Responder Program in place....

In the past many firefighters have been certified as Emergency Medical Technicians, however, without the ability to actually respond to and assist on medical emergencies they have not been able to retain their skills. We have never been comfortable with EMT's responding to medical emergencies who have not had a chance to practice their skills and whose proficiency and competence levels might have decreased. Possible liability due to lack of practice can be greatly reduced or eliminated with First Responder Program.

EMT must also work under the medical direction of a physician which has also been a problem in the past...also solved with First Responder Program.

Other Texas cities currently responding fire engines to medical emergencies as First Responders...

AUSTIN

TEXARKANA

ARLINGTON

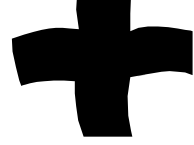
PORT ARTHUR

WICHITA

ABILENE

FALLS

HARLINGIN



LUBBOCK

WACO

Three
Rivers

BEAUMONT

ROUNDROCK

Georgetown

BROWNWOOD

Issues for implementation of program?

- Support and funding
 - Funding at this point is minimal. Already have in-house training, in conjunction w/VVRMC, program set-up to train & certify EMT's.
 - Will need EMT kits and tools on responding units. Start at +- \$750 per unit. Working on grants for A.E.D.'s.
 - Request EMT certification be part of the certification pay benefits that the city already provides. Fire Department asking firefighters to take on added responsibilities and duties.
 - Increased run volume may highlight current staffing limitations. Increased manpower necessary at some point in future, with or without First Responder Program.

Next step?

- If council / administration would like to see Del Rio Fire & Rescue Department become certified First Responder Organization...
 - Fire Department First Responder Administrator will meet with EMS Director and Medical Director to complete agreement & complete details.
 - Fire department will continue to assist EMS on an as needed basis, until such time that we have sufficient personnel certified to participate in program.
 - Will initiate the program with personnel currently certified and increase response and participation as more personnel become certified.
 - Hope to have program in full swing by 1st quarter 2003

IN CONCLUSION...

- First Responder Program is a win-win-win situation. The citizens of the community benefit from faster treatment in medical emergencies; EMS benefits by having a “cushion” of additional resources to assist them, and Del Rio Fire & Rescue benefits by having a program in place that allows them to see that personnel certified as EMT’s are given the chance to actively practice their skills, resulting in increased confidence and competence levels when performing as EMT’s.