

Where did we come from?

Back in 1973 the citizens of Templeton acknowledged the importance of having our own emergency medical services, (EMS) to serve the community. We started with door to door fundraising in a true grassroots effort to raise funds for training, supplies and equipment. In 1976 these efforts paid off and the first ambulance was purchased to serve Templeton for medical and trauma emergencies. Since that time, we have designed our EMS system to fill our local needs. The organizational structure of EMS in our town has gone from a volunteer rescue squad with one rescue truck operating at the First Responder level, to operating two ambulances at the Basic Life Support, (BLS) level. Today both ambulances are equipped and staffed at the Advanced Life Support, (ALS) level.

Over the past 5 years, the community has invested over \$127,000.00 to get us to the Advanced Life Support level.



What is EMS?

Emergency Medical Services is a system that provides emergency medical care to the community. It is activated through the 911 system. EMS is most easily recognized when emergency vehicles are seen responding to emergency incidents. But EMS is much more than a ride to the hospital. It is a system of coordinated response and emergency medical care, involving fire, ems, and police members. A comprehensive EMS system is ready every day for every kind of emergency.

What is the difference between First Responder, Basic Life Support, and Advanced Life Support?

First Responders have limited training and the least amount of comprehensive education, clinical experience or clinical skills of EMS personnel. All fire department members must be minimally trained to this level. First Responders cannot transport patients in an ambulance.

Basic Life Support or EMT-Basics are the entry level patient care providers that can transport patients in the ambulance. They receive 120 hours of training in CPR and emergency medical care for the stabilization of sick and injured patients.

Advanced Life Support or Paramedics are the highest level of pre-hospital care providers. They receive approximately 1200 hours of education and training in areas such as American Heart Associations, (AHA) Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support. As well as advanced training in trauma and medical supportive care and treatment.

How are other towns managing their EMS ambulance services?

According to the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, the breakdown of ambulance services systems in the U.S. includes:

Fire department with cross trained EMS: 40%
Fire department with separate EMS: 9%
Government or third service: 14.5%
Private company: 18%
Hospital based service: 7%
Other: 11.5%

Locally the towns of Winchendon, Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Athol, Westminster and Barre are operating their EMS services at the Advanced Paramedic level within their fire department.

Why doesn't EMS fund itself?

There are two main reasons.

Currently the ambulance billable receipts are placed in the Ambulance Reserved Receipt Account established in 2011. This account is designed to cover capital expenses for the fire department, not salaries or the department operating budget.

Secondly, not all EMS calls are paid the same. 68% of our transports are Medicare/Medicaid funded, which are paid at a federally controlled rate, often considerably less than the actual expenditure. Fiscal Year 2017 our ambulances were sent out on 713 ambulance emergency calls. Of those, 605 ended with patients being transported, (374 ALS, 231 BLS). The 113 calls that our services were needed, but we did not transport the patient, there was no bill generated.

What happens if we do not fund EMS?

Quite simply, we lose our town ambulances. The current budget proposal does not include funding for staff or any ambulance services. The state license to operate an ambulance will be lost, as well equipment and supplies. The community will have to rely on outside services. EMTs and paramedics will not be able to continue with their license in Templeton. Without a transporting ambulance service, our employees will only be able to work as a First Responder.

Without a Templeton ambulance who will come?

The Fire Department will send on call First Responders until an out of town ambulance arrives if they are available. The Town now has an agreement with the State of MA called a service zone plan. When the ambulance service is dissolved the Town will have to start over with a new plan. This plan will require a new contract with an ambulance service to provide primary coverage for the town. Mutual Aid agreements will not exist for the ambulance.

What will the department look like?

Most of our department members are crossed trained and cover both fire and EMS calls. Currently our full time, part-time and on-call employees are available to respond to any 911 call we are dispatched for. If we lose the funding for our full and part-time employees for EMS, we also lose this coverage for the fire calls. We will rely only on on-call members to respond from home or work. Our skilled EMS/Fire members will no longer be licensed through Templeton and will be forced to move to alternate services to maintain their license.



Templeton Fire Dept.

Help Us Help You

**Your Town
Ambulance**

Frequently Asked Questions

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