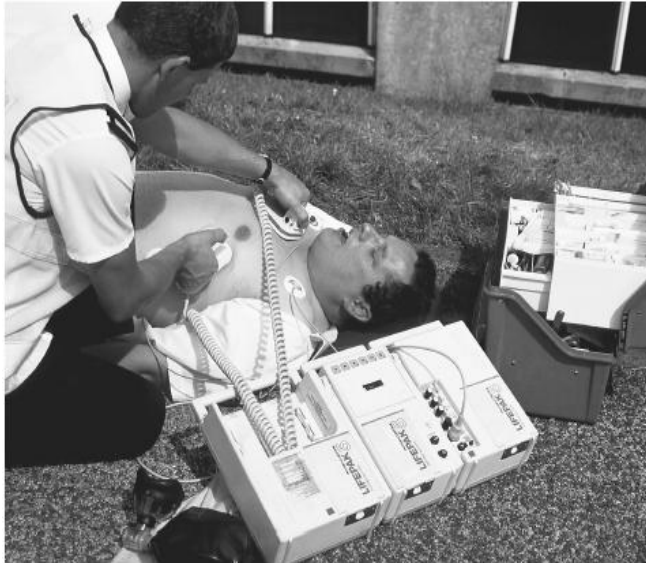




EMS Week



Bristol City Council, along with City Manager Jeff Broughton, recognized by official proclamation the week of May 17 -23 as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week. EMS Week is observed to recognize and honor the men and women who devote their time and energy to save the lives of others. Bristol Fire/Rescue provides EMS with 54 shift personnel, 40 of whom are trained to the level of EMT-IV, and 14 who have earned advanced training to the level of EMT-P (Paramedic). “To maintain minimum staffing levels and provide the highest level of care possible, we also employ 3 temporary or part time paramedics”, said Bristol Fire Chief Bob Barnes. The program of hiring temporary paramedics to fill in for full time employees who are taking scheduled time off saves the taxpayers thousands of dollars while maintaining our standard of care added Barnes. Four additional firefighters will begin an 18 month paramedic training program this fall and upon completion the department will employ the highest number ever of EMT-Paramedics.

The primary goal and function of the EMS system is to provide acute care; additional responsibilities include accident and injury prevention, treatment of chronic conditions, and assisting in educating our community about health issues. The duties of Emergency Medical Technicians include scene assessment, emergency management, emergency transport, record keeping, and equipment and vehicle maintenance. Most important; however, is the EMT’s role in saving lives, lessening pain, and reducing the

extent of disability. EMTs are trained in a myriad of capacities enabling them to rapidly and safely treat and transport the sick and injured.

The Paramedic is a highly trained and skilled medical professional who is trained to perform some duties of a Physician prior to or during a patient's transport to a medical facility. Paramedics can examine, evaluate and treat patients with equipment and medications usually only found in the emergency departments of hospitals. Paramedics are used as emergency care practitioners on ambulances, or on first response emergency vehicles, but the scope of their role is rapidly expanding too many other areas. In some communities they are the sole or highest trained medical provider in their area.

Former Fire Chief Phil Vinson introduced EMS to the department in the 1980's by training and assigning first responders to engine companies. EMS provided by the fire department expanded and by 1990 the department staffed and operated an advanced life support ambulance. As EMS calls continued to increase the need arose for the City to become the sole provider of EMS, and a second ambulance was eventually placed into service. With approval of the city manager, Chief Barnes and staff requested local legislators to introduce a bill allowing the department to change the color scheme of their ambulances (black over red) so that they are readily identified as Bristol Fire/Rescue units. The department responded to 3,745 EMS related calls in 2008 with an average emergency response time of 4:14. The City recently purchased two new ambulances; and, over the next two years the city will refurbish the department's older ambulances providing a fleet of 4 ambulances to serve the community.

EMS Week, May 17-23, 2009, is a special time of the year for EMS providers and the community. The **EMS Week** observance will culminate with an open house sponsored by Bristol Fire/Rescue, to be held at the Central Fire Station located at 211 Bluff City Highway. The open house will begin at 10:30 am and end at 1:30 pm on May 23rd and Chief Barnes and staff encourage everyone to stop by for a visit, look over the equipment, and get to know some of the professional men and women who serve you, your family and our community.