

National Emergency Medical Services Week

Think About Our Local Safety Services

Andover EMS press release

National Emergency Medical Services Week will be observed May 15 through May 21. It is a time to think about the people our community relies upon to help us when the unthinkable happens.

Local emergencies may not get the press coverage that the big disasters happening thousands of miles away receive, but to our friends and neighbors, these day-to-day emergencies can be just as dangerous and deadly. Andover's volunteer force of Licensed First Responders, EMT Basics, EMT Intermediates, and EMT Paramedics – working with the Andover Police Department, the Andover Fire Department, the East Andover Fire Department, and other public health and safety departments from around the area – respond when we are in trouble and make a difference in our lives.

EMTs and Paramedics have long since evolved from their humble beginnings as simply a fast ride to the hospital in the local undertaker's hearse.

Andover's ambulance 32-A1 is called a "pre-hospital unit" because it provides critical care that cannot wait for a ride to the emergency room in Franklin or New London.

Andover's EMTs have collectively attended thousands of hours of classroom education for their initial certification, and our Paramedics, the highest level of field medical providers, must complete more rigorous training, as well as internship time, and must be masters of acute care. Not only that, but EMTs and Paramedics in New Hampshire must recertify their license every two years and must attend hundreds more hours of rigorous continuing education to achieve that recertification.

Andover's Volunteer EMTs and Paramedics, working in tandem with our local fire departments, police, and DOT, bring the first "golden hour" of emergency care to the patient's side no matter where the patient may be. Please take the time this month to thank those who serve our community so well. (See the list on page 1.)

Consider Joining MRC and CERT

Your Help Could Be Vital In An Emergency

**By Heather Makechnie
MRC-CERT Recruiting Officer**

The Greater Franklin-Bristol CERT and MRC units – an important source of mutual aid in the event of an emergency in Andover – are in urgent need of more help. To be sure our area is ready to respond, we especially need doctors, nurses, clergy, interpreters, pharmacists, truck drivers, IT specialists, plumbers, retirees, veterinarians, news reporters, food preparation workers, social workers, childcare workers, morticians, administrative personnel, lawyers, dentists, and construction workers.

Medical Reserve Corps

When the World Trade Center Towers and Pentagon were attacked on September 11, 2001, many thousands of people rushed to that devastated site to volunteer help. Among them were doctors, nurses, and emergency responders who were turned away because they were an unknown resource, not part of a trained, accountable, affiliated group or entity, and therefore could not be trusted.

One of the lessons that came out of that tragedy was that we lacked a system for organizing and credentialing medical volunteers. President Bush directed the creation of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) to bolster public health and emergency response with trained teams of supplemental medical personnel.

Community Emergency Response Team

After the Loma Linda earthquake in 1989, California officials realized that large-scale disasters may quickly overwhelm local emergency personnel, and that a volunteer citizen group, properly trained, affiliated, and accountable, and

with proper background checks, would be an invaluable asset to local emergency officials. Such a program, called the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) quickly grew and spread to all 50 states. CERT teams



are trained in such skills as search and rescue, small fire suppression, shelter operation, ham radio operation, first aid and CPR, traffic control, animal rescue, and disaster psychology.

Both of these organizations, MRC and CERT, have formed a key function in New Hampshire's (and Andover's) emergency preparation plan since 2008. Recently our Greater Franklin-Bristol MRC and CERT teams have participated in H1N1 flu clinics, ice storms, floods, tornadoes, power outages, health education initiatives, regional disaster drills, and large public events like dog sled races, old home days, and marathon races. They are constantly training and stand ready to support emergency responses in the future.

Not "If" – "When"

Please realize that it is not "if" there will be another emergency in our community, or the community next to us, but rather, "when." In any large-scale or sustained event, our brave emergency responders may find themselves overwhelmed. Help cannot be expected from our state or federal resources for some time, most likely days, if the emergency is widespread.

However, as in all volunteer efforts, the ranks are thin. There is an urgent need for more "hands." MRC and CERT are looking for more members, especially doctors, nurses, clergy, and the many other skills listed above.

Membership, training, and equipment are free. Each member determines his or her level of activity and deployment. Please consider joining. Contact Heather Makechnie, Recruiting Officer, at 738-4002 or HMakechnie@aol.com. For more information, visit GFB CERTMRC.com.



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