

Leicester Emergency Medical Services Department

Michael R. Dupuis – Fire Chief

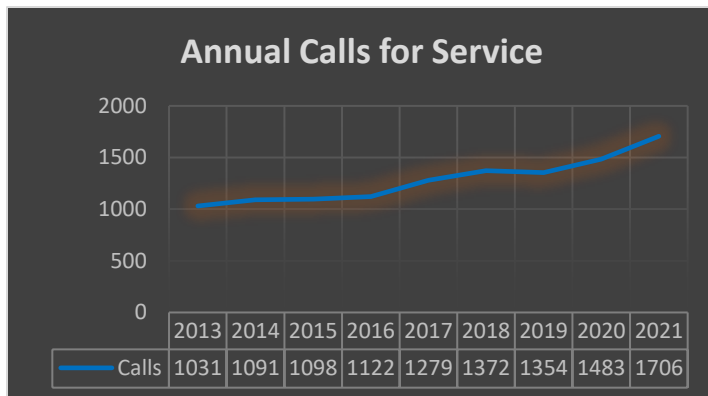
Brian D. Kelley – Interim EMS Director

Donna Fields – Fire/EMS Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTION

It is my honor and privilege to submit the Leicester Emergency Medical Services (LEMS) Department's annual report. Over the last several years, Leicester EMS has experienced an unprecedented increase in call volume, responding to a record breaking 1,706 incidents in 2021 – a 15 % increase from 2020.

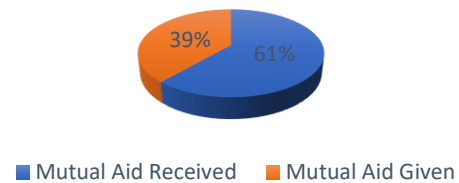
EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND REVENUE



In 1981, when the Ambulance Service separated from the Leicester Police Department, we responded to 396 calls for service. Over the last five years, Leicester EMS has seen a 52 % increase in call volume. For the second straight year, the department set a record for the busiest month in our history – in May 2021 we responded to 183 emergency medical calls. If this trend continues, by 2026 we will respond to an estimated 2,549 calls for service annually.

Leicester EMS was able to cover 92 % of our call volume this year as the primary ambulance on scene. We provided mutual aid 119 times in 2021 but received mutual aid 317 times. 52 % of our mutual aid requests have been for an ALS Intercept – a request for another ambulance service to provide Paramedic Services to a patient being cared for by Leicester EMS EMTs when one of our Paramedics is unavailable.

Mutual Aid Responses



Effective October 1, 2021 the Leicester Selectboard approved and implemented a revised fee schedule for services provided by Leicester EMS. It is anticipated that these changes will provide a substantial increase in revenue to continue to offset the majority of the operating costs of Leicester EMS. It should be noted however, that the Departments ability to completely offset its operating budget while still maintaining effective staffing with safe, reliable, and modern apparatus and equipment will not be possible without partially being subsidized by the Town of Leicester. This is as a direct result of the low reimbursement rates from Medicare and Medicaid.

PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

Leicester EMS currently employs 47 Personnel (30 EMTs, 16 Paramedics, and 1 Administrative Assistant). Leicester EMS currently has no full-time EMS Providers, and is instead staffed entirely by on-call, per-diem and part-time personnel.

This staffing model presents a unique challenge in terms of ensuring adequate 24/7 Paramedic Level coverage. In addition, the national paramedic shortage, as well as antiquated compensation packages further complicate our staffing abilities. Furthermore, during periods of severe weather, or when large events are held within the Town of Leicester, additional personnel are placed on-duty to ensure that we appropriate Emergency Medical Services Personnel are available. In 2021, the Leicester Selectboard elected to permit Leicester EMS to transition to 24/7 hourly pay, as well as increases in our existing hourly rates to offer competitive pay rates for our EMS Providers effective November 1, 2021.

In August 2021, longtime Executive Director Robert Wilson was replaced by Interim EMS Director Brian Kelley. 2021 saw the beginning of the re-organization of the Leicester EMS Department, including the appointment of Michael Dupuis as the first Full-Time Fire Chief, who as part of his duties will assist in overseeing Leicester EMS. Furthermore, the department appointed two Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Specialists who will ensure 100 % of our Patient Care Reports are reviewed to ensure the highest quality of care is delivered to each and everyone of our patients. Further revision of the Chain of Command and additional supervisory positions are planned for 2022.

I strongly urge the residents of Leicester to consider the creation of four Full-Time Paramedic Positions in the next one to two years. These positions would permit the Town of Leicester to guarantee that the first ambulance out the door, will always be staffed at the Paramedic Level.

APPARATUS

Leicester EMS currently operates three Advanced Life Support (ALS) Paramedic Level Ambulances:

- Ambulance 1 – 2015 International
- Ambulance 2 – 2005 Chevrolet
- Ambulance 3 – 2012 International

Leicester EMS apparatus was plagued by mechanical issues throughout 2021, resulting in multiple ambulances being placed out of service simultaneously, resulting in an increased number of requests for mutual aid – despite Leicester EMS personnel being available to respond to emergencies. In 2020, an order was placed for a new ambulance that was initially slated to be delivered in the Summer of 2021, however due to production delays related to the COVID-19 Pandemic it is expected to arrive in February 2022 – this will replace Ambulance 1. At the 2021 Fall Town Meeting funds were allocated to replace Ambulance 2 with a used ambulance – the search for a suitable ambulance is ongoing. In 2021, the “old” Ambulance 3, a 2006 Ford was replaced by purchasing a used, 2012 International previously operated by Holden Fire Department.

In 2022, the Leicester Fire Department will take possession of a former Leicester Police SUV which will replace the current Car 1. Car 1 will be converted into a utility vehicle to be utilized by members of Leicester EMS and Leicester Fire to attend trainings, details, operate as a “back-up” command vehicle, and respond to emergency calls as needed. It is the intention of this department to also license the vehicle as a Class V Ambulance, allowing it to carry emergency medical equipment, supplies and medications.

EQUIPMENT

Over the last several years, several capital needs of Leicester EMS have been met including replacement of all three Cardiac Monitors with Lifepack 15s, and the purchase of Lucas CPR Devices for all ambulances.

In 2021 the Community Compact IT Grant was applied for and obtained – allowing Leicester EMS to replace all computers on the ambulances used to complete Patient Care Reports (PCR)s, as well as to purchase and transition to a new reporting software, ESO. This software will enable to the department to appropriately (and electronically track) call volume and will decrease the amount of time from completion of a PCR to its transmission to our 3rd party billing service – thus decreasing insurance reimbursement times. In addition, modems have been purchased which will allow the Cardiac Monitors to transmit telemetry to area hospital, as well as streamlining the process to attach the Cardiac Monitor data to the PCRs written by our EMTs and Paramedics.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic in December 2019, the pandemic further strained the overburdened Healthcare System. Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services (EMS) have not been immune. Recruitment and retention of employees has been affected by the pandemic.

The pandemic has not only affected the retention of employees, but also with the length of time it takes to complete a call – the “turnaround time”. Ambulance crews are faced with long waits at Hospital Emergency Departments before being able to transfer a patient (and care of the patient) to the facility on nearly every call. Furthermore, crews that transport patients confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, must full decontaminate the ambulance and all equipment contained within. However, with the help of the Leicester Emergency Management Agency and the Leicester Board of Health, Leicester EMS is well equipped in terms of Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) to respond to calls for service where the patient is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

In conjunction with the Leicester Board of Health, Leicester Emergency Management, and Leicester Fire Department, a plethora of COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics have successfully been developed and held, resulting in hundreds of adult and pediatric individuals receiving their primary series and/or boosters in a timely manner.

SUMMARY

2021 was another year of firsts for Leicester EMS – record breaking number of calls in a single month and in a single year! Leicester EMS is redefining itself as a leader in the Emergency Medical Services industry to ensure we are ready at a moments notice to provide compassionate, high quality pre-hospital emergency care to each and every patient.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian D. Kelley, EMT-P, I/C, MA

Interim EMS Director

Leicester Emergency Medical Services Department