

**Chatham Emergency Squad  
Annual Report for 2008**



**Steven M. Davenport  
Captain**

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## **Introduction**

Chatham Emergency Squad, Inc. (CES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1936. We provide basic emergency medical services to the Chathams, responding to approximately 1100 dispatches a year. CES members are all volunteers and we never charge for our services. CES funds come primarily from donations, augmented by annual funding by Chatham Township and Chatham Borough. We can be found on the Internet at [chathamemergencysquad.org](http://chathamemergencysquad.org).

## **Affiliation**

The Chatham Emergency Squad is a private self-governing corporation unaffiliated with any municipality or agency. We are a member of the New Jersey State First Aid Council and cooperate closely with the following local organizations:

- Chatham Borough Police Department
- Chatham Township Police Department
- Chatham Borough Fire Department
- Chatham Township Fire Department
- Green Village Volunteer Fire Department
- Atlantic Health System
- Morris County EMS Captains Alliance

Beyond cooperation in the field, the Squad provides the police with medical supplies such as oxygen and masks. We also create and file the appropriate reports when police defibrillators are used.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Chatham Emergency Squad has six major elements:

- To render basic emergency life support and ambulance transportation for Chatham Borough and Township residents and visitors in the event of accident or sudden illness.
- To transport Chatham residents whose health requires non-emergency ambulance transportation to and from hospitals or nursing homes (when such transport can be accomplished without reducing emergency coverage below acceptable levels).
- To render assistance to Chatham residents in such matters as moving helpless, sick, injured or elderly people to and from automobiles or upper floors of homes.

- To provide an on-site ambulance and crew for community events (such as football games and road races) where the likelihood of injury is heightened.
- To participate in emergency disaster work as requested by emergency management authorities.
- To assist neighboring communities when their ambulances are not available.

## **Qualifications and Training**

Every CES member providing patient care is certified by the State of New Jersey as an Emergency Medical Technician - Basic (EMT-B). This certification requires a 120-hour training course and qualifying test. EMT-Bs are trained in basic emergency care skills including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, automated defibrillation, using definitive airway adjuncts, oxygen therapy, first aid, splinting, assisting patients with certain medications and lifting and moving patients. We are even taught how to deliver babies and have exercised that skill on several occasions.

EMT-Bs must recertify every three years by taking a mandated number of State-certified continuing-education courses. The Squad hosts such courses at our facility each month. Many CES members greatly exceed the required minimum number of courses and seek the broadest possible training.

The standards of Squad membership are considerably more rigorous than simply earning a state certification. New or “Probationary” members must demonstrate an understanding of Squad protocols and prove key skills in the field before being promoted to “Certified” status, a process that takes many months.

In 2008, the Squad:

- Deployed carbon monoxide oximeters on the ambulances and trained EMT members in their use. The devices were purchased through grants from the Township of Chatham, the Chatham Jaycees and a private foundation
- Improved the breadth of EMT continuing education courses offered on-site. Annual recertification requirements are now fulfilled on-line freeing up training time for new curricula such as “Winter Emergencies” and “Crush Injuries”.

## Operations

In 2008, the Squad responded to 1132 dispatches, roughly the same as the prior year. The dispatches included 625 to the Township, 476 to the Borough and 31 as mutual aid to other towns (including 9 to Madison and 12 to Summit). Mutual aid requests will grow as staffing shortfalls in nearby communities become more acute.

The 1132 total includes 78 dispatches to King James Care Center. This number is a significant reduction from prior years as the facility continues to be disciplined in using CES for emergency situations only. There were 50 calls to Juniper Village and two to Garden Terrace Nursing Home.

CES responded to 727 medical calls (where the patient is ill) and 318 trauma calls (where the patient is injured). The remainder of calls was to support fire scenes (28 calls) and non-emergency patient transports (26 calls).

In addition to these emergent and patient service calls, CES also provides ambulance coverage and EMT presence at CHS football games and community gatherings such as parades, street fairs, road races and graduations. This presence is often bolstered and made more flexible by the deployment of the Bike Unit. In 2008, the Bike Unit provided coverage for twelve events in and out of town – a number likely to grow in 2009.

The Quality Improvement Committee monitors our field operations by reviewing written call sheets to enhance performance and documentation. Ongoing feedback, training and suggestions are provided to crew chiefs and their crews.

Operations are supported by fifteen member-staffed committees. These committees are: Bike Unit, Buildings and Grounds, Communications, Computer, Delegates, Fund Drive, First Aid Supplies, Membership, Oxygen, Public Relations, Quality Improvement, Rig Maintenance, Training, Social and Uniforms. Time spent on emergency calls is but a small fraction of the service given by the members to maintain the enterprise.

As has long been the case, the role of the Squad in the community is greater than its explicit mission. In 2009, CES sponsored four blood drives and offered blood pressure checks at the farmer's market. The Squad sponsored free CPR and first aid courses for residents. The holiday "Snow Village" was offered to the public through a series of open houses. All of these activities will be repeated – and likely expanded – in 2009.

## Membership Status

Sufficient new members joined in 2008 to offset normal attrition. CES currently has 85 members in the following categories:

- Forty-nine full-time members (Certified and Probationary), serving one 12-hour shift per week plus weekend duty
- Eleven Cadets who are high-school students serving one 3-hour shift per week
- Six on leave of absence
- Five Auxiliary members helping with the administrative burdens of the Squad
- Thirteen students away at college or graduate school
- One Physician Member.

While the current membership of the Squad is strong, Chatham is not immune to the factors negatively impacting – and in some cases imperiling – volunteer ambulance companies across the state.

The greatest personnel shortfall risk is weekdays during the working day – especially when the duty crew is already deployed on a call. The total of 49 Certified and Probationary members seems robust until those at work or with childcare responsibilities are factored out. Seven members reside outside of the Chathams and are not able to respond when not on duty. On any given day, the small remaining subset – approximately fifteen members – is further reduced by illnesses, travel, duty crew participation and other personal commitments. CES has a near-perfect record of rapid response to second and third simultaneous calls but the burden of doing so falls to a very few.

The Squad will endeavor to avoid paid ambulance coverage as has happened in Parsippany, Troy, Randolph, Boonton and other towns due to the absence of sufficient volunteers. Close to home, Berkeley Heights has paid service two days per week and Florham Park reports considering partially paid coverage.

***Retaining current members and attracting new members remain the greatest concerns of the organization.***

## Leadership

Administrative officers recently elected to serve calendar years 2009 and 2010 are:

- President Shlomo Halfin
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Carole Linhart
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Celeste Fondaco
- Recording Secretary Lynda Stauderman
- Corresponding Secretary Janice Camelotto
- Treasurer Jim Farese

Line officers previously elected to two-year terms ending 2009 are:

- Captain Steve Davenport
- 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Nina Benton
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Christine Grobert
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant Marty Sechehay
- 4<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant Alex Chorny

Selected by the Captain to serve terms concurrent with his own are:

- Sergeant Joseph McCabe
- Sergeant John Grobert

## Financial Status

CES resources come from four sources:

- Voluntary contributions mostly from Chatham residents, merchants and civic organizations
- Bequests and “in memory of” gifts
- Funding from the Borough of Chatham and Township of Chatham municipal governments (each providing about 5% of our annual expenses)
- Specific purpose grants received from the municipalities, private foundations and charitable organizations

The Squad’s annual fund drive is a community-wide appeal primarily through direct mail. At present, total income meets current needs. There are no financial issues.

In addition to providing some funding for operations, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township jointly fund the Squad’s Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) - a nominal monetary recognition for an individual Squad member’s service to the community.

## **Assets**

CES owns and operates three ambulances, replaced periodically to limit each ambulance's service life to a targeted ten years. In 2008, repair expenses and out-of-service days for the two Braun ambulances escalated.

CES owns two buildings: one at 45 Spring Street in the Township (housing two ambulances) and another at 31 N. Passaic Avenue in the Borough (housing one ambulance). Both facilities are in excellent condition with the Borough facility having undergone a major upgrade in 2005 – 2006. Significant 2008 improvements included: replacement of the Spring Street building radio antenna, re-landscaping to achieve lower maintenance requirements and reconditioning the buildings to improve energy efficiency and safety.

The sewer easement on the 45 Spring Street property was amended to allow the Township of Chatham to construct a bike path.

Our other assets are the customary equipment for an enterprise of our type: radios, pagers, office equipment, computers and first-aid equipment and supplies.

## **Future Plans**

- Aggressively recruit new members.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade our physical plant.
- Continue our practice of an annual fund drive to assure that we have the resources to maintain and improve our physical plant and rolling stock.
- Maintain our high standard of patient care. We will continue and enhance our Quality Improvement activities. The Squad will avail itself of the best possible training for its members.
- Increase public awareness of the Squad through the local media.
- Offer CPR and first aid courses to Chatham residents to enhance community preparedness and identify potential members.
- Re-design written patient reports and the tracking of new metrics.
- Form a Rig Purchase Committee to consider the purchase of a new ambulance and the retirement of a Braun ambulance. It is likely that an ambulance will be ordered in 2009 for delivery in 2010.

## **Summary**

The Chatham Emergency Squad is in excellent condition in terms of membership, finances and physical plant. It is a strong and proud organization committed to its mission. There are no immediate issues or concerns of which our stakeholders in the community should be aware. The Squad does, however, call on the community and its leadership to support in any way possible the attraction of volunteer members.