

**Chatham Emergency Squad
Annual Report for 2009**



**Martin E. Secheyay
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 1200 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 Borough and Chatham Township. We can be found on the Internet at 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.

Highlights of 2009

- Installed safes in each ambulance to allow for the secure transport of weapons and items of evidence.
- 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 BLS/ALS, a Paramedic Assistant course, Mass Gathering/Special Events Operations and Crime Scene Awareness.
- Ordered a new Ambulance for delivery mid-year 2010. One of the older ambulances will be traded in.

- Outfitted the Squad in new coats which meet all applicable standards for visibility and safety.
- Re-designed the written patient care report.
- Respiratory fit tested Borough and Township Police departments for N-95 masks.
- Refined CES protocols for firefighter rehabilitation in conjunction with the fire departments.

Operations

In 2009, the Squad responded to 1174 dispatches, an increase of 42 over the prior year. The dispatches included 644 to the Township, 498 to the Borough and 32 as mutual aid to other towns. Mutual aid requests are expected to grow as staffing shortfalls in nearby communities become more acute.

The 1174 total includes 71 dispatches to King James Care Center, 77 calls to Juniper Village and 6 to Garden Terrace Nursing Home. The increase in calls to Juniper Village clearly reflects the aging of its population.

CES responded to 797 medical calls (where the patient is ill) and 338 trauma calls (where the patient is injured). The remainder of calls was to support fire scenes (15 calls) and non-emergency patient transports (24 calls).

In addition to these emergency 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 2009, the Bike Unit provided coverage for eight events within Chatham and at neighboring towns.

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 four operational Lieutenants and four administrative Vice Presidents who supervise 21 member-staffed managerial functions. These functions are: Quality Improvement, Delegates, Bike Unit, Ambulance Maintenance, Electronics Equipment, First-Aid Equipment, Oxygen Equipment, Uniforms, Cadets, Training Courses, Driving, CEVO, Treasurer, Fund Drive, Insurance, Public Relations, Social Events, Food Services, Building and Grounds, Computer Systems and Archivist/Historian. 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 which collected 135 pints of whole blood 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. The Squad hosted numerous building and ambulance tours for local Boy and Girl Scout troops. CES also participated in "Health Day" activities at Washington Ave School. All of these activities will be repeated, and likely expanded, in 2010.

Membership Status

Sufficient new members joined in 2009 to offset normal attrition. CES currently has 81 members in the following categories:

- Fifty-four full-time members (Certified and Probationary), serving one 12-hour shift per week plus weekend duty
- Seven Cadets who are high-school students serving one 3-hour shift per week
- Four on leave of absence
- Seven Auxiliary members helping with the administrative burdens of the Squad
- Eight 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 in neighboring communities and across the state. The squad prides itself on its spirit of "Neighbors helping Neighbors". Thanks to this spirit and the strength of membership, the Squad is able to respond in almost all instances to "duty crew out" calls with a second or third ambulance as needed without having to rely on mutual aid from adjacent towns.

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

Leadership

Administrative officers recently elected to serve calendar years 2010 and 2011 are:

- President Sam Francis
- Finance Vice President Joe McCabe
- Communications and Social Events Vice President Christine Grobert
- Facilities Vice President John Grobert
- Secretary Janice Camelotto

Line officers recently elected to serve calendar years 2010 and 2011 are:

- Captain Marty Sechehay
- Operations Lieutenant Alex Chorny
- Equipment Lieutenant Ricky D'Costa
- Personnel Lieutenant Jim Farese
- Training Lieutenant Carole Linhart

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 2009, repair expenses and out-of-service days for the two Braun ambulances continued at an elevated level.

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 2009 improvements included: replacement of the generator at the N. Passaic Avenue building and reconditioning heating and power systems in both buildings to improve energy efficiency and safety.

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.
- Consider adopting the use of an electronic tablet patient care reporting system.

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 every way possible the attraction of volunteer members.