

Chatham Emergency Squad

Annual Report for 2013



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Introduction

Chatham Emergency Squad, Inc. (CES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1936 providing basic emergency medical services to the Chathams, responding to approximately 1100 emergency medical calls per year. All members are volunteers and we never charge for our services. CES funds come primarily from donations, augmented by a small amount of annual funding from Chatham Borough and Chatham Township, with occasional grants from local organizations for equipment purchases. We also benefit from worker's compensation insurance provided 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 Volunteer Fire Department
- Green Village Volunteer Fire Department
- Atlantic Health System
- Morris County EMS Alliance
- Morris County Communications Center

Beyond cooperation in the field, CES provides the police with medical supplies such as oxygen and masks. We also create and file the appropriate reports when police defibrillators are used. In 2013 we initiated a project to assure annual CPR recertification for all police officers, firefighters, and DPW workers in both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township and Chatham school nurses, teachers, and coaches. A web-based system of records was implemented to support the management of this training, allowing departmental members to register for classes and view training status.

Mission

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

- To render emergency basic life support and ambulance transportation to sick and injured persons within Chatham Borough (the "Borough") and Chatham Township (the "Township").
- To transport Chatham residents whose health requires non-emergency ambulance transportation to and from hospitals, nursing homes, or other appropriate patient-care facilities, when resources are available for non-emergency use.
- To render miscellaneous assistance to Chatham residents in such matters as moving sick, injured or elderly people to and from automobiles, or up and down stairs, when resources are available for non-emergency use.

- To improve the preparedness of the Chatham community for medical emergencies.
- To participate in emergency disaster work as required or requested by emergency management authorities.
- To provide mutual aid to neighboring communities when requested.

Qualifications and Training

Every CES member providing patient care is certified by the State of New Jersey as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). This certification requires completion of an extensive training course of over 200 hours, culminating in the New Jersey State qualifying test. EMTs are trained in basic emergency-care skills including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, defibrillation, using airway adjuncts, oxygen therapy, first aid, splinting, assisting patients with certain medications, administering epinephrine via Squad-owned epi-pens, and lifting and moving patients. Members are even taught how to deliver babies and have exercised that skill on several occasions, though not recently.

EMTs must recertify periodically, currently every five years, by taking a mandated number of State-certified continuing-education courses and refresher courses. CES hosts such courses at our facility. Many CES members greatly exceed the required minimum number of courses and seek the broadest possible training.

The standards of CES membership are considerably more rigorous than simply earning a State EMT certification. New members enter as “probationary members” and must demonstrate an understanding of CES protocols and prove key skills in the field before being promoted to certified status, a process that takes up to 18 months.

Highlights of 2013

- Conducted many CPR classes for educational and citizens groups at no charge. Also initiated a project to assure annual CPR recertification for all Chatham responders regardless of their agency. This initiative includes both police departments, all three fire departments, both departments of public works, as well as Chatham school nurses, teachers, and coaches. A web-based system of records has been developed to support the management of this training, allowing departmental members to register for classes, and allowing departmental training officers to view the certification status of every member of their department. In 2013, 39 CPR classes were held training 236 people in CPR.
- Conducted multiple drills with fire departments and supported several working fires by providing patient care and firefighter rehabilitation.
- Ordered a new ambulance to replace our oldest ambulance that is more than 13 years old. Subsequent to this report, the new ambulance was delivered and placed into service in January 2014.
- Expanded our mission to include “To improve the preparedness of the Chatham community for medical emergencies.” This was demonstrated by the publishing a newsletter to the citizens of the Chathams that was well received. The newsletter discussed the importance of calling 9-1-1 in a timely manner and recognizing the signs and symptoms of major medical emergencies.

Operations

In 2013, CES responded to 1043 dispatches, 4% fewer than the prior year. The dispatches included 549 to the Township, 468 to the Borough, and 26 as mutual aid to other towns.

The 1043 total includes 58 dispatches to Juniper Village, 34 to King James Care Center, 6 to Garden Terrace Nursing Home, and 1 to Victorian Garden Adult Day Center. This total of 99 dispatches to elder-care facilities is a 15% increase from the prior year but still considerably lower than in past years.

CES responded to 659 medical calls (where the patient is ill) and 312 trauma calls (where the patient is injured). The remaining calls were 9 dispatches to fire scenes, 7 non-emergency patient transports, and 56 other miscellaneous calls.

In addition to these emergency and patient service calls, CES also provided ambulance coverage and EMT presence at CHS home varsity football games and community gatherings such as parades, street fairs, road races, and graduations.

Our Quality Improvement Manager monitors our field operations by managing a reviewing committee which assesses every written Patient Care Report to enhance performance and documentation. Ongoing feedback, training, and suggestions are provided to crew chiefs and their crews.

Our organizational structure is led by a President, who is the chief administrative officer, and a Captain, who is the chief operations officer.

As has long been the case, the role of the Squad in the community is greater than its explicit mission. In 2013, CES sponsored four blood drives in Chatham, yielding 149 pints of blood. The holiday "Snow Village" was enjoyed by the public through a series of open houses. CES hosted numerous building and ambulance tours for local groups including Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. All of these activities will continue in 2014.

Membership Status

A sufficient number of new members joined in 2013 to keep the Squad at full strength. CES has 85 members in the following categories:

- 45 full-time members (certified and probationary) serving 12-hour weekly shifts plus weekend duty approximately every 6 weeks
- 9 cadets who are high-school students serving one 3-hour shift per week
- 5 members on leave of absence
- 12 auxiliary members helping with the administrative functions of the Squad
- 9 students away at college or graduate school
- 1 physician member

These numbers are essentially the same as a year ago.

While the current membership of the Squad is strong, CES 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 remains one of the greatest priorities of the organization.

Financial Status

CES financial 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 annual expenses).
- Special-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, including ambulance purchases, and 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), which is a nominal monetary recognition of an individual Squad member’s service to the community. The Squad also benefits from worker’s compensation insurance provided by Chatham Borough and Chatham Township

Assets

CES owns and operates three ambulances, replaced periodically to limit each ambulance’s service life to a targeted ten years.

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.

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

Trends

A significant portion of education expenses continues to be paid for by the squad due to the fact that the EMT training fund remains underfunded. Contributions to the training fund by the state have been reinstated at a reduced level that requires us to pay for all continuing education classes as well as a percentage of EMT classes.

The Chatham Emergency Squad benefits from the extraordinary generosity of Chatham citizens both in donations to the Squad and in volunteering to serve as members. As a result, despite these economic issues which are impacting most squads in New Jersey, our financial situation is as strong or stronger than it has ever been, as is our cadre of members.

Future Plans

- Maintain our high standard of patient care. CES will continue to enhance its Quality Improvement activities and avail itself of the best possible training for its members.
- Continue to train our members in the expanded scope of practice which New Jersey has recently implemented for EMTs at our level.
- Continue our practice of an annual fund drive to assure that we have the resources to maintain and improve our physical plant and ambulance fleet and cover our operating expenses in the face of rising training costs.
- Undertake initiatives to improve the preparedness of Chatham residents for medical emergencies.
- Improve and strengthen our training regarding Multiple Casualty Incidents. A new position, MCI Training Manager, has been created to support this effort.
- Continue annual CPR and defibrillator training for all Chatham responders, including police officers, firefighters, and DPW workers as well as nurses, teachers and coaches in the school 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.