



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Story of the Fire Department's New Ambulance



Cliff Behrman, former Chief of the Madeira & Indian Hill Fire Department, recalls initiating emergency runs for the district in the 1940s. The vehicle used was a converted Chrysler limousine with doors cut to accommodate a cot. Firemen took a Red Cross course to learn basic first aid techniques. In those earlier days, "you tried to stop somebody from bleeding to death, and keep him breathing." Fortunately Mercy Hospital on Miami Road was close so professional help was nearby.

Recently the Fire Department purchased a new ambulance to replace a 13-year-old vehicle. Paid for with monies from the capital improvement fund, this was a budgeted expense. With ambulance replacement slated on a projected 10-year cycle, the retired ambulance performed 3 extra years, and capital fund money was saved. Both this new medic unit and another 7-year-old one are housed at the Madeira station.

The new 2003 Horton Ambulance was built in central Ohio; it is a customized box on top of a Ford Chassis. It is patterned after the vehicle it replaced, with similar design and layout for interior storage. One compartment contains portable duffels for different emergencies—oxygen, splinting equipment, backboards, bandaging supplies, IV equipment, and the heart monitor defibrillator unit. Another compartment has a range of medications. Benches are on each side of the cot, and there is a jump seat directly in back of the driver. Almost all the equipment was moved from the retired ambulance to the new one. A few items were purchased, and the big new purchase was a state-of-the-art stretcher, paid for by a \$4000 state grant. There is room for the patient and 3 professionals in back and the driver up front.



In most instances the fire station is notified of an emergency by the Hamilton County Communication Center. When the patient calls 911, a dispatcher determines which emergency crew to call based on the address. At the station, a bell goes off, and there is a voice announcement about particulars of the situation, (such as chest pains, person injured in fall) and whether there is a premise history. Usually 2 paramedics depart in an ambulance from Madeira and simultaneously 2 paramedics or EMTs depart in a fire truck from Indian Hill. Having 4 trained persons on site is helpful for transporting a stretcher, and in serious cases, one person from the fire truck assists in the ambulance. For dire cases, 3 paramedics depart together from Madeira, and 1 person from the fire truck joins them on the way to the hospital. This occurs, for example, in a cardiac arrest, when there is a driver, one person doing chest compression, another doing manual breathing by machine, and a third starting the IV and administering the defibrillator.

The EMS unit attempts to take patients to the hospital of their choice. Speed is an important factor in responding to emergencies, and the response time depends on traffic and time of day. Because it takes longer to get to north Indian Hill, the Montgomery EMS goes as first responders, and administers lifesaving treatment until Madeira/Indian Hill arrives. There is a mutual aid agreement between local fire departments. Each agrees to help neighboring communities should there be a shortage of vehicles, such as when 3 emergencies occur simultaneously. There is no financial charge to any patient transported by the Madeira/ Indian EMS, a rarity in Cincinnati.

The Madeira & Indian Hill Fire Department has 23 paramedics and 19 EMTs, all of whom attend annual continuing education courses. Educated and certified, these professionals are truly dedicated individuals. The new Horton ambulance, which has made 350 runs already, maintains reliable service with the most up-to-date equipment. The vehicle and the caregivers inside keep area residents well served during emergencies.

Thanks to Chief Steve Ashbrock, Lt. Dean Winkelman and retired Chief Cliff Behrman.