

# **Green County EMS, Inc. Operational Overview**

## **About Us:**

Green County Emergency Medical Service, Inc., (GCEMS) located in Monroe, Wisconsin, was founded in 1974 as a private non-profit, volunteer, community service organization. GCEMS was created with the intention of being a self-supporting entity, serving the City of Monroe and the surrounding area. Therefore, GCEMS receives no local government funding, is not a tax-based service, and is only funded through donations and service fees. The fleet consists of three Type III ambulances, and one rapid response/intercept vehicle, all equipped with state-of-the-art emergency equipment. GCEMS provides advanced life support at the EMT Intermediate-99 level.

## **Our Purpose:**

The purpose of Green County EMS shall be to establish, staff, and maintain an emergency ambulance service for Monroe, Wisconsin, and environs. GCEMS does not routinely provide non-emergency service. This corporation is organized as a social welfare organization intended to qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. In 2001, GCEMS became a component of the Monroe Fund, which qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) for donation purposes.

## **Our Mission:**

Green County EMS, is an organization committed to providing pre-hospital care to the City of Monroe and the surrounding area. We staff and maintain an emergency ambulance service to provide pre-hospital care for people in need, without discrimination based on gender, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, creed, or socioeconomic level. We recognize people as individuals and treat them with respect, dignity, and sincerity. We recognize the importance of volunteers and the importance of support from our community and surrounding areas. We value the importance of continuing education. We believe in providing care to our patients with passion, compassion, and professional competency.

## **Our Mission Statement:**

Green County EMS serves the public as a team of dedicated, compassionate, volunteer professionals by providing quality emergency care, education, and community service.

## **About Our Service Area:**

Green County EMS responds to about 1400 calls per year and serves approximately 20,000 people. In addition to the City of Monroe, our service area includes 7 villages: South Wayne, Browntown, Martintown, Clarno, Juda, Twin Grove, and Oakley. Green County EMS serves 10 townships in both Green and Lafayette counties: Monroe, Wayne, Mt. Pleasant, Clarno, Jordan, Washington, Cadiz, Jefferson, Spring Grove, and Sylvester.

Our service area is made up of the City of Monroe, small towns, and a large farming community. Rolling hills, woodlands, streams, rivers, and lakes are all a part of Green County. The name "Little Switzerland" is deep in Green County heritage. Green County was built by the farming community and is home to two large industries outside of the city limits - farming and cheese production. Many farms and cheese factories dot the landscape, no matter what route you choose to take.

There are two golf courses in our service area, an indoor roller skating rink, and an indoor ice arena. There are 17 parks/recreation areas designated in and around the City of Monroe, one that includes an outdoor swimming pool. Monroe has three fitness centers, Curves for Women, 24-Hour Fitness, and the YMCA - a 40,300 sq. ft. facility, which sits on 10-acres of land and includes an indoor 6-lane 25-meter pool.

Monroe, and the surrounding communities, hosts numerous events throughout the year, which pose a challenge to the EMS system. Some of the bigger events that take place in the

City of Monroe and the surrounding area are: Cheese Days, Depot Days, Green County

Breakfast on the Farm, Balloon Rally, Taste of Monroe, Dairy Days, Fourth of July Celebration, Badger Booster Days, Green County Fair, Maxwell Street Days, Monroe Fire

School, Berghoff & Blues Festival, Oktoberfest/Polkafest, and Swiss Fest. The surrounding communities hold many festivals as well; Browntown Summer Fest, New Glarus Heidi

Festival & William Tell Festival, South Wayne Red Cracker Fest, Fourth of July Celebrations, Memorial Day Celebrations, and many other events too numerous to mention.

GCEMS is responsible for mutual aid to all the communities in its territory, and is on "standby" during many of the events, or is alerted if additional help or advanced life support is needed. GCEMS is requested to provide services (stand-by) at many events, including the Apostolate to the Handicap, events at the Green County Fair, triathlons, bikeathons, walkathons, 5K & 10K races, football games, hockey tournaments, and bike rodeos. GCEMS hosts ambulance and facility tours to many youth groups, such as daycares, boy scouts, and girl scouts. GCEMS also participates in safety fairs and other school programs.

### **Transportation:**

Green County EMS sits in the center of Green County. This unique position affords us with the ability to provide mutual aid to surrounding communities and provide patients with excellent emergency care. GCEMS transports the majority of its

patients to the Monroe Clinic Hospital ER. If the patient is too unstable to transport, an air ambulance service may be called to the scene. The Green County Sheriffs Department can request one of many services: Med-Flight, which operates with two helicopters from UW Hospital, Madison; REACT from Rockford Memorial Hospital; Flight for Life from Milwaukee; and Lifeline from St. Anthony Hospital, Rockford. Although GCEMS transports patients primarily to The Monroe Clinic Hospital, we occasionally transport to Lafayette County Memorial Hospital, Darlington; Mercy Hospital, Janesville; Beloit Memorial Hospital, Beloit; any of three Rockford (Illinois) Hospitals, (Saint Anthony's Medical Center, Swedish American, or Rockford Memorial) or any of the three Madison hospitals (Meriter, St. Mary's, or UW Hospital and Clinics).

While the majority of our patients are transported to the nearest facility to receive care as soon as possible, at times, patients are transported to other hospitals depending on the physician's or patients' preference, or for a specific type of care needed. Depending on the incident location, required rescue efforts, hospital destination, and road conditions, total time for patient care can vary from as little as 10 minutes to in excess of an hour or more. At times, by request, our crews have transported patients as far away as Milwaukee, Chicago, Iowa City, or the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

#### **Medical Direction & Quality Assurance:**

Dr. Beth Yount, at the Monroe Clinic Hospital, is the EMS Medical Control Director for Green County EMS. She has accepted the responsibility to assure that all physicians in the Monroe Clinic Emergency/Walk-in Care Department are familiar with EMS policies and procedures, as well as the roles and responsibilities of physicians providing on-line medical direction to the EMTs. One or two Emergency Room Physicians are always present (24/7) in the Emergency Room. In conjunction with the Medical Control Director, Mary Austin, RN, EMS Coordinator within the EMS office of The Monroe Clinic, ensures quality assurance and continuing education.

The Monroe Clinic EMS Office maintains a record of attendance and skills performed by the EMTs in the field and in clinicals, training sessions, exams, and recertifications. Run reports are reviewed monthly with special attention regarding runs that utilize advanced skills. GCEMS receives a run report review each month and statistics are entered into the monthly report form. The monthly report is used to evaluate all runs by and through this record. The EMTs' practice can be evaluated, any problems can be addressed immediately, and records can be used for continuing education or retraining. All run reports are delivered to the EMS Coordinator at The Monroe Clinic for review. The final reports are then given to Dr. Yount for her review and signature.

#### **Citizen Access & Communications:**

The area served by Green County EMS is equipped with the enhanced 911 system. EMS calls are dispatched from the Green County Sheriff's Department. Access numbers in Green County are 911 or Green County Sheriffs Department at 328-9400.

When an ambulance call comes into the Dispatch Center the ambulance service is alerted by a pager system. Members of GCEMS are each provided with a pager and those signed on for that shift respond by reporting to the ambulance station. When the full ambulance crew is present, they contact dispatch and inform them that the ambulance is in service and responding. Continuous contact between the ambulance, dispatch, medical control, and the receiving hospital, is maintained by radio or cellular phone.

GCEMS equips all ambulances with a mobile and portable radio, which allows for communication with multiple agencies, such as, Green County Sheriff, Dane County Sheriff, Monroe Police Department, and Green County Fire & First Response Departments, as well as other area agencies.

### **Headquarters:**

Our facility is privately owned by the corporation but sits on city property. Per an original agreement, the land is leased for \$1 per year for 99 years. Over 50% of our members reside outside the required four-minute response time and remain at the station or near-by during their shift of call. The building was renovated in November 2001 due to space constraints and inadequate living & sleeping arrangements. The project was totally funded by private donations and existing funds. A second story was added, which includes an office with five workstations, a spacious training room, a training equipment storage room, a large conference room, full-size kitchen, two bathrooms, and a handicap accessible entrance. The first floor training area was remodeled to provide for three private sleeping quarters, a lounge with kitchenette, two bathrooms, a supply room, oxygen room, and laundry room. The ambulance bay doors were widened to accommodate larger, modern ambulances.

### **Organizational Structure & Operations:**

The membership consists of approximately 70 members, which are made up of EMT-Basics, Intermediate Technicians, Intermediates (some are also RNs and Paramedics), and about 10 emergency vehicle operators (drivers who are not EMTs).

The five officer positions consist of the Assistant Chief, Compliance Officer, Education/Training Officer, the Equipment/Maintenance Officer, and a Public Information Officer. Only active members that have been on our service for at least one year are eligible to hold an officer position. Officers are appointed by the Chief.

The membership elects the ten-person Board of Directors. The Board is composed of five active members from the membership and five Community Advisors. Community Advisors are citizens of the community at-large (who are not otherwise affiliated with GCEMS) that are recruited to provide expertise and balance to the Board.

Revenue is obtained through private donations, fundraisers, grants, and service fees. The citizens and businesses of Monroe and surrounding communities have always

given generously to support GCEMS, which has made it possible to maintain a high standard of readiness and quality of care. The Wisconsin Funding Assistance Program (a fund established by the State of Wisconsin for ambulance providers) is also used to help defray the costs of continuing education, conventions, or other training events that members may attend throughout the year.

A local accounting firm is retained to prepare taxes, quarterly reports, etc. We also hire a firm that performs our billing and collections, and record keeping. A local attorney is retained to provide legal advice or services as needed.

### **Licensure, Training & Continuing Education:**

The EMT members of Green County EMS maintain licensure at the EMT-Basic, Intermediate Technician, and Intermediate-99 level.

Continuing Education: After the initial training required to obtain an EMT license, there are several additional requirements in order to maintain licensure.

- AED Recertification: Completed twice each year.
- CPR Recertification: Required once every two years (GCEMS requires annual recertification)
- Combitube Airway: Completed twice each year.
- Medication Administration: Completed twice each year.
- Refresher Course: As required by the State of Wisconsin depending on level of training.

Several other agencies, including federal agencies such as OSHA and Homeland Security, require mandatory training. These are: Incident Command, Hazmat Awareness, Bloodborne & Airborne Pathogens, and HIPAA (required for new hires and suggested annually thereafter). In an effort to maintain highly trained and skilled responders, GCEMS has additional training requirements such as EVOC (emergency vehicle operators course), training on certain compliance type policies, new equipment and new procedures.

In turn, many of our members offer their expertise by teaching CPR, CCR, AED, and First Aid courses to local organizations, schools, businesses, and the general public, as well as participating as preceptors for EMS students during their field training through Blackhawk Technical College.

### **Member Retention and Rewards:**

Studies show the average length of time EMTs stay in the business is five years. Like most people in today's world, our members must sometimes juggle more than one job, family commitments, and other service organization commitments. But they still find time to volunteer with EMS, ensuring our community is provided with high-quality emergency medical service, 24-hours a day.

In order to show appreciation for their efforts, Green County EMS provides many membership incentive programs, such as the point system and cash rewards for

exceeding the required call hours. With the point system, members are awarded points for going above and beyond. Members may use their accumulated points towards EMS related activities or the purchase of EMS related equipment/apparel. Members are also given longevity awards, gifts during National EMS Week in May, the annual Christmas party, paid travel/lodging/tuition for EMS related continuing education (conferences, seminars, etc.), company supplied uniforms, and allowed reasonable use of the facilities for personal purposes (family events, washer/dryer, fax, copy machine, computers, etc.)

Beginning January 2011 GCEMS is offering the Wisconsin Service Award Program. The Service Award Program (formerly called the Length of Service Award Program, or LOSA) for volunteer fire fighters and emergency medical technicians was created by 1999 Wisconsin Act 105. The program operates under the direction of an eight-member board, appointed by the Governor, and establishes by rule a tax-deferred benefit program for volunteer fire fighters, first responders, and emergency medical technicians. The Service Award Program is a recruitment and retention program that provides state matching funds to establish retirement accounts that are payable to members after 25 years of service or age 60.

### **Vision & Future Goals:**

EMS is viewed as a standard, valuable community resource that must always be in place.

The complexion of EMS is subject to change dramatically in some aspects. Nevertheless, continued expectations for service by the public and its chosen leaders will ensure that EMS will continue to exist and serve the emergency medical needs of our community. An increasing proportion of the U.S. population is participating in health plans that compel patients to seek specific medical care providers and place a greater emphasis on prevention and health maintenance. As a result, GCEMS supports the Safe Communities, Safe Kids, and Safe America concepts. For the sake of the health of the communities that we serve, we advocate injury and illness prevention through better education and public relations.

It is inevitable that the EMS industry and government mandates will continue to influence the way we operate, forcing change, and placing challenges upon a relatively small volunteer department. Although change can be intimidating, GCEMS accepts the challenge, will overcome adversity, and will continue to provide care in a professional and compassionate manner. We embrace the opportunity to “step outside the box” by exploring innovative ways to achieve our mission, developing models for evaluation, and determining ways to cost-effectively deliver our services.