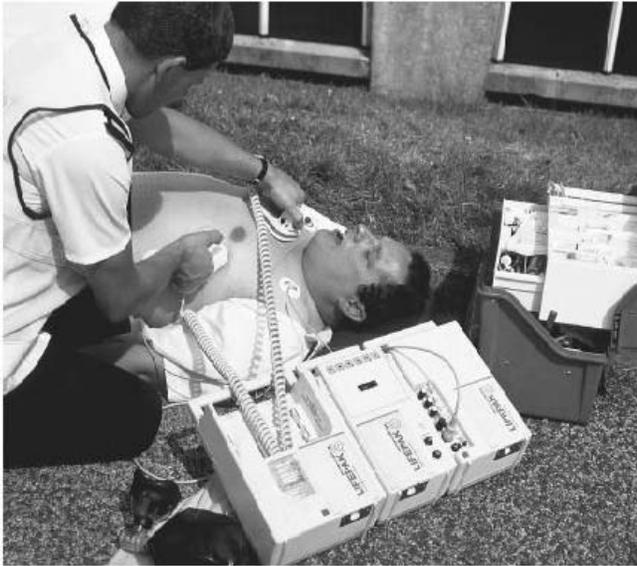




## EMS Week



EMS Week is observed to recognize and honor the men and women who devote their time and energy to save the lives of others. Bristol Fire/Rescue provides EMS with 54 shift personnel, 36 of whom are trained to the level of EMT-IV, and 17 who have earned advanced training to the level of EMT-P (Paramedic). To maintain minimum staffing levels and provide the highest level of care possible, we also employ temporary or part time paramedics. The program of hiring temporary paramedics to fill in for full time employees who are taking scheduled time off saves the taxpayers thousands of dollars while maintaining the departments standard of care.

The primary goal and function of the EMS system is to provide acute care; additional responsibilities include accident and injury prevention, treatment of chronic conditions, and assisting in educating our community about health issues. The duties of Emergency Medical Technicians include scene assessment, emergency management, emergency transport, record keeping, and equipment and vehicle maintenance. Most important; however, is the EMT's role in saving lives, lessening pain, and reducing the extent of disability. EMTs are trained in a myriad of capacities enabling them to rapidly and safely treat and transport the sick and injured.

A paramedic is a highly trained and skilled medical professional who is trained to perform some duties of a physician prior to or during a patient's transport to a medical facility. Paramedics can examine, evaluate and treat patients with equipment and medications usually only found in the emergency departments of hospitals. Paramedics are used as emergency care practitioners on ambulances, or on first response emergency vehicles, but the scope of their role is rapidly expanding too many other areas. In some communities they are the sole or highest trained medical provider in their area.

Former Fire Chief Phil Vinson introduced EMS to the department in the 1980's by training and assigning first responders to engine companies. EMS provided by the Fire Department expanded and by 1990 the department staffed and operated an advanced life support ambulance. As EMS calls continued to increase the need arose for the City to become the sole provider of EMS, and a second ambulance was eventually placed into service. With approval of the City Manager, Chief Barnes and staff requested local legislators to introduce a bill allowing the department to change the color scheme of their ambulances (black over red) so that they are readily identified as Bristol Fire/Rescue units. The department responded to 3,810 EMS related calls in 2013, with an average emergency response time of 5:51. The City recently purchased two new ambulances; and refurbished the department's older ambulances providing a fleet of 4 ambulances to serve the community.