

Emergency Medical Services History

In January 1985, the City of Roanoke implemented the first paid emergency medical services (EMS) program to supplement the three volunteer agencies providing emergency medical service. In 1989, the city formed the Emergency Medical Services Department under the supervision of the Manager of Emergency Services. With the volunteer component declining, a consultant was hired to study options of providing emergency medical service. Options considered were privatization, creation of an authority, fire-based service, and remaining a third service. The consultant recommended the fire-based approach to delivery of emergency medical services. In November 1995, under the management of a new Fire Chief, EMS merged with the Fire Department to create Roanoke Fire-EMS. This merger took several years to mature and train all personnel.

Roanoke Fire-EMS is the sole provider of 911 EMS in the City of Roanoke. We operate 7 advanced life support (ALS) and 2 basic life support (BLS) units 24/7, along with 2 part-time ALS and 1 part-time BLS units during peak-demand hours. All front-line fire engines and ladder trucks provide medical first response with automatic external defibrillators. We provide transport to two hospitals and the Veterans Administration Medical Center. All firefighter/EMTs and firefighter/paramedics are cross-trained and are considered an integral part of the fire company. They rotate duties on the engine, ladder, and rescue/medic units.

For additional information about our emergency medical services, please contact Battalion Chief Andy Foley at 540-853-5854.
