

Apex Fire & EMS

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A reader observes both an updated patch on the [Apex Fire Department web site](#) (compare with the [older patch](#)), and an open position on the [town web site](#) for a full-time Shift Supervisor Paramedic for the "Fire and EMS Department." Guess that means the merger is official. Congrats to the newly combined departments. Next question, red over white ambulances coming?



Heard it takes effect on the 22nd or around that time frame.

CFP 7021 - 03/08/10 - 09:51

As of now, barring anything unforeseen, we become town employees on 3/22/2010. It's been a long time and a lot of people's work getting there.

DJ - 03/08/10 - 11:30

Glad to have EMS be a division of Fire Department. Mike, is this a first total fire based EMS in area. I know Holly Springs has EMS but with County Paramedics

Apex Batt Chief - 03/08/10 - 16:17

So Scoot', fill us in. A lot of us thought it was state law that the EMS system has to be provided by county government (or contracted by the county).

Silver - 03/08/10 - 16:50

Greenville FD runs EMS

Mike - 03/08/10 - 20:41

State law does say that a county is responsible for providing EMS services, but it's the county's choice as to how it does this.

Hey Mike, I have given a really good explanation of this in the past... can you see if you can link the posts?

CJS (Email) - 03/08/10 - 20:53

Yes the County is responsible for EMS coverage. They may contract with whoever they wish. In our case we will be no different contract wise than Garner, Cary, or any of the other private incorporated EMS agencies that the County utilizes. The difference in our case is the Fire Chief is now the Fire/EMS Chief. All of the employees will be full time town employees. All equipment and assets will be titled over to the Town. I don't foresee any issues in this for us. We are going to be run as 2 separate divisions. As it is now we will not be riding ambulances and the Medics will not be cross trained as firefighters

Apex Batt Chief - 03/08/10 - 21:15

Good deal, thanks for explaining. I just hope that manpower from the FD side isn't affected if EMS is running short one day.

Good luck!!

Silver - 03/08/10 - 22:29

Congratulations to Apex!! Fire based EMS is emerging more and more across the county, and from what I have read, seems to be effective. DJ may be able to give some details on the effectiveness of this combination.

A.C. Rich - 03/09/10 - 23:36

A.C., I guess there are two different type systems. Speaking to firemen from Baltimore and D.C., morale stinks because you're a fireman that's forced to ride a "bus". Then you have systems like New York City, where they are two separate entities. I'd prefer the latter of the two if I had to pick, simply based off of conversations with Brothers from those cities. There's more to the conversations, but I'll spare those details...

Silver - 03/09/10 - 23:55

From my experience, it is better with two separate divisions; however, it has worked better when the EMS folks learn some basics of the fire division such as helping catch the hydrant, staging, general operations and tasks that can be done in conjunction with having rehab ready in case it is an incident that requires such. I'm not too fond of an EMS unit checking on scene in command with someone who has a crash course in fire ground ops, but then again, the first unit should establish command and if not, the second unit in must according to NIMS. Anyway, point being, most fire departments require at least a basic knowledge of EMS tactics and it can help if the opposite is true.

rookie - 03/10/10 - 07:53

Rookie, can you clarify your comment? You're not fond of EMS units establishing command at a fire, if they haven't a crash course in fire ops? Is that what you mean??

Legeros - 03/10/10 - 07:57

Sorry, if they have only had a crash course in fire ops and no real experience on a fire scene. In my area, there a couple EMS folks that regularly take command of structure fires and other larger fire events and have never had any formal fire training...they end up making the whole department sound like they are unprofessional because they think it sounds good to take command and be heard on the radio. I will say though that the FIRE/EMS relationship in my area is very good. Sorry for the conflicting comment...I need to start proof-reading. Hopefully this clarifies...

rookie - 03/10/10 - 08:30

Fire based EMS systems work well once the bugs are worked out of it. I worked for two systems like that here in NC and did my internship with a large city that runs FF/PM fire based EMS. If it was your turn to ride the bus, it was your turn. We kept our gear in a compartment in the unit, so if we happened to be first due/on scene, we established command, did our walk arounds, etc... and then went to work if needed. Large departments like MDRF run fire based EMS and the crews bid to be either on the rescue (EMS transport) or a suppression unit. Either way, your gonna get your share of work. Congrats to Apex on thier merger.

Swiman - 03/10/10 - 08:40

Mike S., I'd say MOST fire based systems do. Unfortunately, some have bigger bugs than others!!

Silver - 03/10/10 - 11:40

Having worked in a fully integrated EMS/Fire service, and having good friends in places like DCFD, FDNY, and LAFD, I'll chime in (yeah, imagine that, right?)

The fully integrated service I worked in had cross trained personnel. You had to go to the fire academy in order to get a job. Everybody pulled their turn on the BLS units. Some people liked it, others didn't, some didn't care- they had a job. To get on a paramedic unit was something you had to request. You could get off of it at some point, as long as there was someone to take your spot, and there was not really a problem with that. The thing was people stayed on a paramedic unit for years and years and years by choice. And they stayed on the same unit, not getting switched around from truck to truck, station to station. And, for the most part, morale was pretty good.

Riding on the medic unit we were also assigned fire duties. We carried two SCBA and our turnouts on the unit. Maybe we assisted the first-in engine crew, with maybe a second line crew, maybe we were the search team, maybe we helped the truck with truck ops. IF we were first in, we established command, did the recon, and made assignments. But we also knew that if there was a patient or patients on the scene we were medics first. Everyone knew that. And it worked. Pretty darn well as I recall. But that was there and we're here.

Some of you refer to the morale problems of the bigger departments. Many of those times, the merger was a forced merger. Forced mergers never work from what I have seen (at least not very well, it seems, whether it is a fire agency and an EMS agency, or two (or more) EMS agencies). Sometimes the EMS folks are treated worse than red-headed step children, sometimes it is the reverse. EMS brings it's own challenges with it. Sometimes administration thinks billing will pay EMS' way. Sometimes they think ambulances will last 10 years or more like fire trucks.

EMS is a different animal of sorts. There has to be some planning that goes into a merger or even an acquisition. For example some of the complaints my friends hear in those bigger cities revolve around how they don't help out with station duties. Well, you can't help with something when you ain't there! We have that to a degree here in some stations with some personalities. I always help when I can, but it is nothing for me to get paged out on a call or move-up 15 minutes after reporting for duty and not getting back until supper time (or later). Fortunately, I've only worked with one person who had that problem, and well, he adapted. But the thing is, there are differences a lot of times that are not addressed in mergers and that creates problems.

Separate divisions? I agree, to a point, as long as the EMS Division is treated as equals with the Fire Division. I worked for a service once that was 'overseen' by the fire department, but was not a part. We were not even treated as well as the step children I referred to for a long time. Yes, with separate divisions, there has to be a rank structure within the EMS division, and the EMS folks have to know that they are equals. That was a problem with the little service I worked for, and that's a problem in DC, NY, and other places. While they may have the structure, they are clearly second (or even third) class folks.

That's not going to be a problem in Apex. There has been a lot planning that has gone into this with more to come. And the main thing is that this was a situation where both parties went into it with the desire to make it work. That has not happened in some of the more publicized mergers around the country.

Fire-service EMS does work, given the right attitude, reasonable expectation, and support. Too many places have proven that, but some of the bigger problems cloud the issue, and a lot of those problems are not because it is fire-service based. DCFD is a good example. In their latest newsworthy event, did the child in question die because of bad fire-based EMS paramedics/EMTs or just plain bad paramedics/EMTs?

And on one of the other topics brought up here, I've said it before. EMS needs to have a working knowledge of fireground ops. If we were 'just an ambulance service' it would be different but we are not. We have a high-rise fire protocol that integrates EMS into the operations. We have USAR medics. We are expected to provide a Medical Intervention Team (or two or three) at working building fires. We do a lot of things together. We have to be able to work together and complement one another. I don't think it is unreasonable to expect EMS personnel around these parts to complete some sort of essentials of firefighting related class. After all, the fire folks have to complete EMT (or Medical Responder) and continuing education so that they can help us. And it pays off. So if we (EMS) are trained to some sort of essentials level then we can provide an extra set of hands somewhere, maybe not taking the line through the door, but there is all sorts of things that could be helped.

Just my \$0.04 worth.

DJ - 03/10/10 - 13:50

DJ, that was NOT \$0.04 worth... more like \$20.00!! Hahaha! I'm also giggling you for not using APA! All aside, I agree totally. Let's see... some fundamentals: forward thinking planning, solid leadership, appropriate education, and a "positive attitude"... Could these core behaviors be essential components that contribute to the success of ANY organization, regardless of how it is "based?" Mmmmm, maybe too much to ask. Stay safe buddy!!

A.C. Rich - 03/10/10 - 20:36

OK, AC, so it was a little more than \$0.04 worth. Couldn't help it. It was like potato chips. Once I got started I could not stop.

DJ - 03/10/10 - 23:22

If anyone in Apex can get their hands on a couple of these new ones for our patch board in the ECC please e-mail me. Im trying to keep it up to date as things change. Im also missing Stony Hill and Bayleaf if anyone can help me out with those too.

dispatch ([Email](#)) - 03/11/10 - 08:31

You mean UNIFORM patches, not radio patches, right? LOL. But that's what I thought for a second!

Legeros - 03/11/10 - 08:32

Dispatch call me at station on Friday and i will get you one

Lawrence Carter 362-4001

Apex Batt Chief - 03/11/10 - 11:56

Dispatch- if you want a soon-to-be-collector's item Apex EMS patch, give me a call Friday and I can arrange it.

Dale Johnson 363-1577

DJ - 03/11/10 - 14:24

The merger is going to be good. Apex Fire has great leadership. Over the years Apex RescueApex EMS has been one of the best operated services in Wake County. People skills as well as the money side. No place is perfect, but you could work at alot worse places. Hats off to Nicky Winstead and past admin of Apex EMS. Great job...

EG - 03/12/10 - 18:24

Yikes.....side-note; this Chief was not well liked in D.C.

<http://www.firehouse.com/topics/top-head..>

Silver - 03/13/10 - 01:08

That's an interesting article about the ex-DC chief. Not that I'm any kind of expert, but good leadership at the top, clear vision of roles and responsibilities, and careful planning seem to be key. Everyone here acknowledges that. Of course it's easy to throw around such lofty and rather vague ideals, when there are many "nuts and bolts" in support. The DC Firehouse article mentioned several cases of terrible service and, frankly, non-existent professionalism. If that was the case, it is totally a leadership issue. Some of the problem incidents DC faced also seemed, to my reading, to be the emergency responders diagnosing their patients. They likely have different policies on transport than here in Wake Co., a larger population, and a different assemblage of medical facilities, so I know there is more to the story but I'm quite happy to be here in Wake Co. by comparison. I often wonder why some seek to "lead" organizations such as ours (or any for that matter). Is it with the intention to provide better service and a better work environment for the "troops?" Or, is it to collect a bigger paycheck and wear more brass? I guess I'm a bit of topic but the article got me thinking...probably more appropriate for the "reputation management" discussion. Stay safe!

BC - 03/18/10 - 15:36

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Web Site: (optional)

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/ [Textile](#)

Comment moderation is enabled on this site. This means that your comment will not be visible on this site until it has been approved by an editor.

To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

[\(Register your username / Log in\)](#)

Notify: Yes, send me email when someone replies.

Hide email: Yes, hide my email address.