



HOT TOPICS

Oshkosh Fire Department

CHIEF'S CORNER



November is a busy month! First of all, It's American Diabetes Month. Please be sure to read more about diabetes in this month's newsletter.

November is also the month that the City of Oshkosh will be finalizing its budget for 2021. We are cautious of what the future may hold and have taken a conservative approach with our finances.

Even with that methodology, we were able to keep moving forward to make our community and our firefighters more safe.

We would like to thank the Common Council, City Staff, and most importantly the taxpayers with entrusting us to be financially responsible and to maintain an exceptional level of service.

Happy Veteran's Day! Thanks to our men and women for serving our country.

Stay safe and well and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

---Chief Mike Stanley

DIABETES MONTH

by Chuck Hable, Battalion Chief EMS

Calls for diabetics are a common response for paramedics at the Oshkosh Fire Department (OFD). In the last year, we responded to 120 patients who presented with low blood sugar as a result of diabetes. Of those 120 calls, 25, or just about 21%, were transported to the hospital. Ninety-five or 79%, were treated and released. The average age of the diabetic with low blood sugar in Oshkosh last year was 60. The youngest patient was 2 years old, and the oldest 89.

Diabetics don't just present with low blood sugar; they may also have problems with high blood sugar. The OFD responded to 29 different patients with hyperglycemia in the same time frame. Of those, 23 were transported to the hospital.

Low blood sugar is one of the easiest medical conditions for paramedics to check and to manage. Because it is so easy to check, it is a frequent test we perform. In the last year, paramedics checked blood sugars on 1,940 different patients. While a normal blood sugar is somewhere between 70 and 100, the lowest blood sugar obtained was 21 and the highest was 581.

While dealing with diabetic patients in the pre-hospital setting can be routine, diabetes is a difficult disease to manage long term.

Paramedics always consult with a physician on any patient who might have experienced a low blood sugar, even if they choose not to be transported.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

by Dr. Kerry Ahrens

This month's theme of Diabetes is appropriate, given the profound hyperglycemia many of us experience during Thanksgiving. As you know, there are three types of diabetes: Type I (juvenile onset), Type II, and gestational diabetes. What is more germane to you all is that often these patients present as the 'altered mental status' or the unconscious patient. The differential for the altered/unconscious patient is encompassed in a convenient mnemonic:

AEIOU TIPS:

- Alcohol & Acidosis
- Endocrine, Epilepsy, Electrolytes, Encephalopathy
- Infection
- Opiates, Overdose
- Uremia, Underdose
- Trauma
- Insulin
- Poisoning, Psychosis
- Stroke, Seizure, and Syncope



Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) is one of the most common causes of altered mental status for patients with and without diabetes. It is estimated 1-2% of prehospital encounters and 7% of refusals are for hypoglycemia. Insulin is an anabolic hormone (easy there, Schwarzenegger...) that regulates the metabolism of carbohydrates, protein, and fat through the absorption of glucose from the blood into the liver, fat, and skeletal muscle cells. Type I diabetics (approx 5-10%) have a lack of insulin due to an autoimmune issue and are dependent on insulin being injected into them. Type II diabetes typically occurs in adulthood when insulin is still being made, but the liver, fat, muscle cells are resistant to insulin. The bulk-loads of diabetics (90%) are due to a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, and energy-dense diets. Lastly, about 7% of all pregnancies develop gestational diabetes and is seen the least by EMS agencies.

Our main goal is to identify and treat life-threatening and time-sensitive issues that the general public encounters. For the diabetic, this is hypoglycemia (no one dies suddenly of hyperglycemia). The public health definition is a glucose concentration < 70mg/dL...though most patients do not have symptoms until levels drop below 55mg/dL. Based on 2015 NEMSIS data, prehospital activation for diabetes-related cases accounts for ~2.3% of all activations.

Who do you treat and release vs transport? Villani et al estimated that nationally, approximately 50% of patients EMS encountered with severe hypoglycemia required transport; of that 41% required hospital admission. It was proposed by NASEMSO to transport any patient with either ongoing hypoglycemia and symptoms and/or any person who has experienced a seizure irrespective of their mental status to glucose administration.

Who can you safely release? Anyone with repeat glucose measurement >80mg/dL, the patient uses insulin or metformin, patient returns to normal mental status after receiving glucose, the patient can and will promptly eat a carbohydrate meal, a clear cause of hypoglycemia is identified (forgot to eat, etc), a reliable adult is staying with the patient, no other co-morbid conditions exist (no chest pain, shortness of breath, abdominal pain, etc), or patient is of sound mind/capacity and outright refuses transport.

Keep in mind, sulfonylurea drugs (glipizide, glyburide, glimepiride) are becoming back 'in' again for treatment; these are dangerous in that they can cause a longer-acting hypoglycemic response if the patient is not able to have a carbohydrate meal and can cause a repeat, severe hypoglycemic episodes in a single day.

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR MINUTE

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With all of the above information, the main take home points are: the medical ABCs are important in our world - but DEFG is just as critical (Don't Ever Forget Glucose); and when in doubt transport that hypoglycemic patient. And a fantastic and safe Thanksgiving to you all!

References:

1. Villani M, Earnest A, Smith K, Giannopoulos D, Soldatos G, de Courten B, Zoungas S. Outcomes of people with severe hypoglycaemia requiring prehospital emergency medical services management: a prospective study. *Diabetologia*. 2019 Oct;62(10):1868-1879. [PubMed]
2. Schwerin and Svancarek. EMS Diabetic Protocols for Treat and Release. PMID 32809447.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK560612/>. Last Update: July 21, 2020. Accessed November 8, 2020.
3. The National Association of State EMS Officers (NASEMSO)

Challenge Question What percentage of people age 65 or older with diabetes die from some form of heart disease (stroke, heart attack, etc)?

Answer: At least 68%; adults with diabetes are 2-4x more likely to die from heart disease than those without.

EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Drew Jager

Life Safety Initiative 5 deals with training and certification. The Oshkosh Fire Department has taken several significant leaps of improvement over the last few months to support this critical aspect of our professional development. The acquisition of the training property, and the construction and initial utilization of the training tower are visible signs of these efforts. But just as important, is the background work done by the training division to ensure that our policies, lessons, and practices are up to date, and based on state and national standards.

The staff has spent hundreds of hours revising and updating our Instructor Guides and other electronic training resources. These resources are now available in our Target Solutions electronic training software, rather than having to search through hard copy books and manuals. This allows not only verification of training completion, but also the ability to update materials more quickly if standards or procedures are revised.

Our current training program offer flexibility to fire companies to work on drills and training evolutions at their own pace from the monthly or quarterly task lists, and clear direction on how drills should be done to ensure safety and correct skills improvement. We have also taken steps to more formally recognize the completion of significant areas of responsibility.

A typical path of career progression for members of the department is that they will learn portions of the next step in rank in a mentored fashion. For example, once a position task book and practical evaluation are completed, firefighters are allowed to perform as Relief Equipment Operators (REO's) when needed. This allows them to function in this role while being coached by more experienced drivers and company officers.

The training division has recently developed task books for Acting Officer, and Relief Shift Commander. Our officers have also completed formal Blue Card Incident Commander training. These changes have already resulted in clearer communications at fires, and should result in the highly functioning teamwork that we deliver by our best efforts, and greater safety for our firefighter and citizens.

CARING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT (CAPS)

by Jason Shikoski

It's 3 a.m. and tones sound at the fire house. We get up and quickly prepare to go out on that call, whatever it may be... car accident, fire, heart attack, stroke, suicide, overdose or fall.

Firefighters and paramedics are exposed to numerous stressors throughout their careers. Sometimes it can be overwhelming to process. Please know, that the CAPS team is here for you and can be found in every fire house.

CAPS Team members are a trained group of your peers and are available to all OFD members and retirees. This team provides confidential support. What you talk about goes no further.

If the stress of your job or of life in general are becoming too much, please don't hesitate to reach out to a team member for help. We are here for you. For more information about the CAPS Team check out the CAPS flyer, Target Solutions home page or Policy 920.01.

Take care of yourself and take care of your brothers and sisters.

KITCHEN TABLE TRAINING 'R' IS FOR RAPID

by Greg Stelter

Our Rapid Intervention Crews (RIC) do a great job of preparing for immediate deployment by donning SCBA and facemasks during the attack phase of a structure fire and having RIC gear at hand. Proper staging of the RIC team is just as important.

Take a look at this Main Street fire and put yourself in the shoes of the RIC officer.

- Where will you locate your team for immediate access?
- Should you take any steps to facilitate quick egress of interior crews?
- Are there any additional tools that you might need based on the building construction type?
- What hazards should you be aware of when operating at a building of this type and age?

CAPS Peer Support Team Members

Scott Abbrederis
Mark Boettcher
Peter Fahrenkrug
Steve Gawarecky
Andrew Knoll
Eric Mayer
Jason Shikoski
Mike Stephens

POST INCIDENT SUPPORT CONFIDENTIAL LIFE'S CHALLENGES



WHAT'S NEW

Last month we had our first meeting of the HERo program. This is a unique partnership between the Oshkosh Fire Department and Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of East Central Wisconsin. Three "Littles" have been matched with their "Big Sister" with more matches in the future. The "Littles" are middle school aged girls who want to find out more about the fire department.

The HERo program is different from the regular BBBS relationship in that once a month OFD provides insights into what it is like being a firefighter. It helps young women explore emergency services as a career option. COVID-19 has required us to meet virtually, but we are very hopeful that we will be able to do hands on training in a fire station soon.



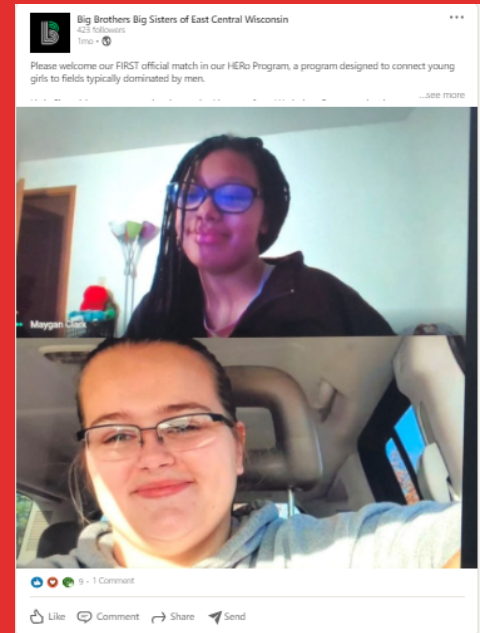
Our friends at the Oshkosh Public Museum recently completed an installation in the entryway of Fire Station 15. This fire station is also home to the Oshkosh Fire Department's headquarters. Now visitors are greeted by a timeline that proudly displays the over 150 years of service that the men and women of the Oshkosh Fire Department have provided to the community. The Information Technology department also replicated the timeline on our website. Learn more about our [history](#) [here](#).



Thank you!

- To Assistant Store Manager John Delany at Lowe's for their donations of a drill bit set, cold chisel/punch set and SAE & Metric Nut Driver Set in recognition of Fire Prevention Week!
- To General Manager Henry Schultz of Oshkosh Red Robin for a Family Bundle of food for all of stations and shifts!
- To Walmart for their grant of \$4,500 to purchase smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors that we will install in the community!

We are very grateful for your generous support!



Our Mission

The mission of the City of Oshkosh Fire Department is to prevent, respond to, and to minimize harmful situations to the people we serve.



"I HAVE A NEWS FLASH!"

Dedicated. Caring. Welcoming. Professional. Conscientious. Calming Force. Level Headed. Thorough. Compassionate. Father Figure. Helpful. Does the right thing. He would give you the shirt off his back. Knows his cars. These are just a few words or phrases used by his team, his peers and colleagues about Battalion Chief Mark Boettcher. Mark recently celebrated 35 years of service with the Oshkosh Fire Department.



Mark started with the OFD back in 1985, the same year he married his wife Terre. In 1995 he was promoted to equipment operator; in 1997 to lieutenant, in 2001 to Captain and in 2005 to Battalion Chief. Last year, Mark was selected as the 54th Assembly District's Responder of the Year. He was nominated because of his notable career and the contributions he has made not only to the OFD, but to the community as well.

Chief Mike Stanley said, "Mark Boettcher is a true gentleman who embodies the motto of the Oshkosh Fire Department which is 'Be Nice.' He has my admiration and respect." Mark has been an asset to the OFD. We are grateful to have him as a key part of the command staff. Congratulations BC Boettcher!

Mark is most frequently teased about his communication channel comment:

"We're in high speed pursuit!"

PREVENT, PREPARE, PRACTICE

by John Holland, Public Information

With winter on the way and people turning on their furnaces and fireplaces it's time to make sure you have working Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors in your home. CO is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas created when any fuel is burned. Some sources of CO in the average household include: Gas/Oil burning furnaces, Gas water heaters, Gas ranges and ovens, Gas dryers, Fireplaces, Charcoal or gas grills, and Vehicles (including lawnmowers and snow blowers).

The symptoms of CO poisoning are "flu-like" including: headache, dizziness, nausea, sleepiness, and confusion. Prolonged or high level exposure can lead to unconsciousness and even death. Since CO is odorless and colorless the only way to protect yourself and your family is by purchasing and installing a CO detector today. They should also be tested once a month (along with your smoke detectors) to ensure they're working.

CO detectors come in a variety shapes and can be either battery operated or electric. There are even some combination smoke and CO detectors on the market. Regardless of their appearance, all UL listed CO detectors are designed to do the same thing—notify you when the levels of CO in your home are dangerously high. Prevent CO from becoming a problem:

- Have your heating/cooling systems checked every year.
- Keep your chimney well maintained.
- Follow all directions on all appliances.
- Start yard equipment outdoors.
- Never use a charcoal or gas grill indoors (including inside a garage)
- Never use a gas range or oven for heating.
- Never leave any vehicle running in a garage.
- If the alarms sounds leave the building immediately. Don't open windows & doors. If you do, it will make it much more difficult for us to identify the source of the problem.
- Go to your family meeting place and call 9-1-1. It is an emergency. You have poisonous gas in your home. Don't re-enter the building until the fire department gives the OK.



2020 FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

by Eric Shea, EMS Shift Coordinator

For years, the Oshkosh Fire Department (OFD) has been partnering with the Salvation Army in its drive to collect food and toys for families in the Oshkosh area. This year's toy and food drive is still going to happen, although it will look different than in other years. We will be holding three "drive through" drop off nights in the parking lot directly west of Station 15 (the Convention Center overflow lot). Those dates and times are:

Thursday, December 3rd - 5:30 to 7:30pm

Monday, December 7th - 5:30 to 7:30pm

Wednesday, December 9th - 5:30 to 7:30pm



The public can drop off donations at any firehouse. We will have blue recycle bins at each station for "contact-less" donations. Cash donations can be made through [Paypal](#). The money collected will be used for the Gary Kassube Scholarships for graduating seniors from Oshkosh North and Oshkosh West. One \$500 scholarship is available for a student from each school who will enroll in a police or fire science program.

This drive would not be possible without the help of every single one of you. Thank you!

METRICS MATTER

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst

One of the most important metrics that a fire department can measure is response time. That is, how long does it take from the time the call is dispatched until the time that the fire truck or ambulance arrives on the scene of an incident.

All 911 calls in Winnebago County are answered at the Communications Dispatch Center located in the Sheriff's building. From there, calls are dispatched to the appropriate discipline (i.e law enforcement, medical or fire) and jurisdiction. The Communication Center staff go through a rigorous six month training in all emergent and non emergent possibilities; from abdominal pains to wounds, strokes, gas leak, carbon monoxide, diabetes, falls, dumpster fires, respiratory issues and hazardous materials. The list goes on and on. They are your first point of contact.



The Oshkosh Fire Department not only responds to medical and fire calls for the City of Oshkosh, but they also respond to calls in Algoma, Black Wolf, Nekimi, Poygan, Rushford, Utica, Winchester, City and Town of Omro, Village and Town of Winneconne. We also provide mutual aide to Neenah, Menasha, and FonduLac. Often in the rural communities, the first person on scene will most likely be a first responder. Rural communities may have their own fire service.

Our goal and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is to “provide an initial responding unit to emergencies in the City of Oshkosh that present an immediate threat to life or property in less than six minutes 90% of the time”. That means that our professional firefighters/paramedics need to gear up, get out the door and drive to the incident while dealing with traffic, road construction, weather and other obstacles. In 2019, we responded to 4,431 emergency calls within the City of Oshkosh. In 81.2% of the calls we responded within 6 minutes or less. As of the end of October, the OFD has responded to 3,933 emergent calls. In over 75% of the time we responded in 6 minutes or less.

With a goal of 90% we still have a way to go, Improving our performance is an ongoing, continuous process that we measure on a regular monthly basis. Watch next month for an article about our upcoming Fire Department Dashboard project.

OCTOBER 2020



749 EMS Calls



89 Fire Calls



495 Inspections

LET'S CONNECT

