

To all those whose office phone number is 9-1-1, thank you, Clay County EMS



**NATIONAL EMS WEEK  
MAY 17 - 23, 2015**

National Emergency Services Week has been observed annually since being first declared by President Gerald Ford in 1974. This year, EMS Week is May 17-23 and our slogan is "EMS Strong." EMS Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to recognize and honor the dedication of those who provide day-to-day lifesaving services of emergency medicine's "front line." EMS Strong will make EMS Week a 365-day a year initiative to give EMS a significantly greater visibility among other heal professions and communities. Putting EMS squarely where it belongs: as an indispensable part of the healthcare continuum.

**ACT**

**F A S T**  
**FACE ARM SPEECH TIME**

Look for an uneven smile

Check if one arm is weak

Listen for slurred speech

Call 911 right away

**CALL 911**

Learn to recognize a stroke. Because time lost is brain lost.

**Any one of these signs could mean a stroke**

- Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Today there are treatments that may reduce the risk of damage from the most common type of stroke, but only if you get help quickly - within three hours of your first symptoms.

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience these warning signs.

**STROKE RISK FACTORS**

- High Blood Pressure
- Smoking
- Not Being Active
- Atrial Fibrillation (A-fib)
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High Cholesterol
- Poor Circulation
- Family History of Stroke

Talk to your doctor and visit [StrokeCall911.com](http://StrokeCall911.com) to learn more

**Vermillion Emergency Medical Services**

By Shauna Marlette  
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865 – Without context, it is hard to know if that is a small, large or a huge number. In this case, what it is, is the number of calls the Vermillion Emergency Medical Services Division (EMS) answered in 2014 – a larger volume of calls than ever before.

According to Matthew Callahan, EMS Chief, that is a direct response to public education and awareness – but more importantly a credit to the crew who serve the Vermillion community, and answer the call, literally, whenever the phone rings.

The Vermillion EMS division has three fully stocked ambulances, with two staffed at all times, to assure and maintain response times to emergent and non-

emergent ambulance calls, Callahan said.

"We run two-12 hour shifts in a day," he said. "We have what is called 'Paid On Call' where if we get a call, the team members on call have to be leaving the station within seven minutes of the call. Most of our staff stay in the area – their homes, jobs – but for some of them that live out of the seven-minute window, that means they utilize the station facilities."

Callahan said the commitment of the staff is unquestionable.

"The great majority of the crew are either employed full-time or are students at the University (USD)," he explained. "All of them are giving up one of their days off each week to take a shift. They are required to be on call 24 hours per week."

He said that the variety of backgrounds of the employees include medical students, nursing students, music majors, policemen, dispatch personnel, nurses and



MATTHEW CALLAHAN, EMS CHIEF

real estate agents, to name a few.

"It is honestly made up of a group of people who are truly interested and dedicated to making sure the community

of Vermillion and the surrounding areas have access to emergency care," Callahan said. "While it is not a volunteer position, because they are paid for their time, it truly takes a giving attitude to be willing to be involved with this. They enjoy helping people and that is what drives them."

Beyond even the hours required to be on duty, Callahan noted that the people involved with EMS are required to do many hours of training per year to maintain their certification.

"To even become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), which is our most basic level of certified employee, requires 160 hours of training," Callahan said. "That is where they learn the basics from CPR, to splinting and how to immobilize a patient. They are certi-

fied to administer 4-5 different drugs."

He added that the next level is the Advanced EMT. To earn your Advanced EMT requires an additional 300 hours of training where they learn to start IVs, how to use and monitor cardiac monitors and additional medication uses.

The most advanced level is a Paramedic, which requires an additional 1,200 hours of classes.

"We try to have at least one Advanced EMT or higher on every team," he said. "Currently we have about 10 advanced EMTs, 12 EMTs and for paramedics on staff."

Callahan noted that last year the staff each completed about 720 hours of training to maintain their certifications.

While the number of calls handled by the

staff was a record year, Callahan said he doesn't see the demand going down, rather he expects to see it grow each year, and he is glad for the reason.

"What we are seeing is better public awareness that if they are having an issue, they know they need to call right away, rather than wait," he said. "We are also transporting patients from the hospital here in town to either Sioux Falls or Sioux City every day."

He added that the public education done by the department is something that he is proud of.

"Every month through the fire department we offer CPR classes," he said. "In addition, we are doing public education and community outreach programs warning of the dangers of slips, trips and falls."

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