



Martinsville Rescue Squad Newsletter

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Can You Guess Our Most Common EMS Call Type?

Last year the Martinsville Rescue Squad responded to 1181 calls for help. Over the years the number of calls has gradually increased as the Martinsville and Bridgewater area population grows and ages. Throughout the years, however, the most common reason to call 911 for EMS help in our area has stayed the same. You might think it would be for heart-related problems like chest pain or difficulty breathing, right? Or perhaps you think it would be for motor vehicle collisions because of the major highways and interstates that cross through Bridgewater. But year after year, the number one reason to request us has been ... for falls.

Whether they are caused by trips, slips, dizziness, weakness, distraction, or loss of balance, anyone of any age can fall. But the elderly are particularly prone to falls for a variety of reasons and they are the most vulnerable to bodily injury due to a fall. Fall risk increases with age. Over 75% of the fall victim calls we respond to are to help someone of age 65 or older.

Falls don't "just happen," and people don't fall because they get older. Often, more than one underlying cause or risk factor is involved in a fall. A risk factor is something that increases a person's risk or susceptibility to a medical problem or disease.

Some common risk factors include:

1. Muscle weakness, especially in the legs, is one of the most important risk factors.
2. Blood pressure that drops too much when you get up from lying down or sitting can increase your chance of falling.
3. Foot problems that cause painful feet, and wearing unsafe footwear can increase your chance of falling.
4. Your reflexes may also be slower than when you were younger.
5. Some medications increase your risk of falling because they cause side effects like dizziness or confusion.
6. Not seeing well can also result in falls.
7. The more medications you take the more likely you are to fall.

The Martinsville Rescue Squad is ready and able to help those who fall. We much prefer, however, to prevent those falls before they happen. Why not take some time now to think about what you can do to prevent falls? Consult with your doctor first, but consider exercises to strengthen your legs, review your medications, remove slip and trip hazards, add railings, and improve lighting in dark areas of your home.

OLDER ADULT FALLS
A Common Concern

IN 2014:
1 in 4 older adults reported a fall.

More than **7 MILLION** of those falls required medical treatment or restricted activity for at least a day.

More than **27,000** older adults died as a result of falls — that's 74 older adults every day.

STEADI Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries

www.cdc.gov/steady

For More Information on Falls and Fall Prevention

There are some excellent resources available online should you decide to look for more information. Check out:

1. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/patient.html>

Honoring Our Long-Time Volunteers

Since our incorporation in 1957 over 500 area residents have volunteered for the Martinsville Rescue Squad. They volunteered because they wanted to help people and it was a good way to make our community better and to keep it a special place. On average a squad member volunteers for 5 to 10 years before life changes cause them to move on. Jobs change, family demands change, health changes, and interests change.

Fortunately for our community and the squad, there are a number of our fellow residents whose commitment to community service has been and, in some cases, continues to be truly exceptional. In this newsletter we want to honor the Martinsville Rescue Squad members who, since the year 2000, have completed at least 30 years of volunteer service. They are a remarkable group who over time did more than their share to lead the squad and to keep it steadfastly committed to free, high quality emergency medical service.

We offer our appreciation and respect to (in alphabetical order):

- Howard Bixler, Active, 30 years
- Donna Butler, Member Emeritus 2008, 32 years
- Tom Butler, Member Emeritus 2008, 32 years
- Don Elias, Active, 32 years
- Ray Levy, Member Emeritus 2008, 37 years
- Fred Moench, Active, 38 years
- Jim Scott, Active, 33 years

Next time you happen to see any of these squad members, please warmly shake their hand and thank them for their years of service to our community.

Some Squad Facts

Our Service:

- Of our 1181 call responses in 2016, 386 were responses to life-threatening injuries or illnesses.
- Our most common call was for fall victims, but 67% of our calls were medical in nature.

Our Costs:

- We operate 3 ambulances, with the oldest being in service since 2001. Ambulance maintenance cost us over \$27,000 in 2016.
- Insurance, our second largest expense, cost us almost \$22,000 in 2016.
- Our next biggest expense, building maintenance and utilities, cost about \$14,000 in 2016.
- Staffing cost us \$0. We are 100% staffed by volunteers.

Our Members:

- We have 58 active volunteer members, 38 of whom are EMTs.
- Our members contributed over 25,000 hours of volunteer service in 2016.
- Our youngest member is 16 years old. Our oldest is 87 years old.

Did You Know?

Independent Sector, a nonprofit organization, each year calculates the value of volunteer time. For 2016, they estimated the national average value of a volunteer hour was \$24.14. For more information see <https://www.independentsector.org/news-post/value-volunteer-time/>.