

**Southwest
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**STATEMENT FROM JEFF SARGENT
PRESIDENT - SOUTHWEST AMBULANCE**

Southwest Ambulance recognizes that the explosive growth throughout Arizona has created numerous challenges in the provision of emergency services. The public can be assured that Southwest and everyone within the emergency response system is doing an extraordinary job to manage responses and resources to meet the challenges that come with rapid growth.

Southwest Ambulance takes safety concerns and complaints very seriously because the health and safety of our employees are very important to us.

The Department of Health Services and the community set the response time standards and Southwest Ambulance has met those standards.

Ambulances with high mileage

At every 4,000 miles a comprehensive bumper-to-bumper 60-point inspection is performed on every ambulance using the approved Southwest Ambulance Preventative Maintenance Checklist. (See attached document)

No ambulance is allowed in service if it does not meet our rigorous standards.

All ambulances in our fleet, regardless of mileage, meets and exceeds industry standards and is compliant with the following state and federal regulations and guidelines:

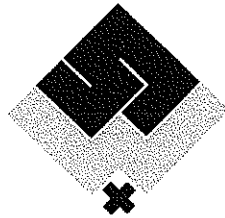
- AZ Department of Health Services
- AMD 001-1009, NTEA Ambulance Performance Standards
- KKK-A-1822E, Star of Life Ambulance Federal Specifications

Employee Allegation

According to Channel 5, an employee complained about getting sick due to the ambulances air condition not working properly. I was aware that an employee felt ill with symptoms of dehydration on the job. The company is dedicated to preventative maintenance care of all ambulances. Each employee is responsible for alerting his or her immediate supervisor of any problems with the ambulance. In my follow-up investigation into the allegation, I could not substantiate any notification of air-conditioning problems prior to the allegation. After the incident, the ambulance was checked and the air-conditioning was working.

All ambulances have air conditioning units that are inspected on a regular basis and are not allowed on the street if it does not meet industry standards. There is an auto throttle switch in

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each ambulance that increases the throttle during a parked idle when the engine is on so the unit will not overheat.

Our fleet department inspects, maintains, and repairs the front and rear air conditioning systems of each unit. The crews are able to report immediate problems with any part of the ambulances. If the air conditioning is not operating properly, the ambulance is immediately placed out of service and sent to the Fleet Department to obtain an operable unit.

Additionally, employees are allowed to bring food and drinks in the front compartment of the ambulance. Crews are able to eat and drink in the ambulance to remain properly nourished and hydrated as long as there is no patient onboard.

Crews are equipped with portable radios, pagers, and cellular phones. Crews are able to leave the unit for breaks (lunch, bathroom, stretch, etc.) as long as they can be reached via radio, pager, or phone.

Extended Response Time Incident

The exceptions when an emergency response takes longer than it should are both rare and usually isolated to areas where developments are far away from the main population center.

Channel 5 News asked about a case that occurred in March of 2008 that involved one rare instance of an unacceptable response time out of more than 225,000 calls received in the Valley annually.

After reviewing the information supplied by the Channel 5 news reporter, I was able to determine the following:

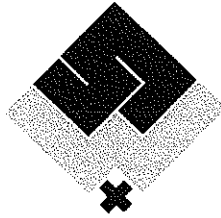
First, the patient received outstanding on-scene care from the responding fire fighter – paramedics. This is normal for all 911 emergencies.

Second, the call came into our dispatch center normally. The on-duty dispatcher did not follow policy and there was a delay of several minutes before the mistake was discovered.

Third, immediately upon discovery of the dispatcher's error, a stand-by ambulance unit was dispatched to the scene. Due to the delay, however, the on-scene fire fighter – paramedics took action on behalf of the patient and transported the patient to the hospital and the ambulance crew was recalled.

Fourth, the dispatcher was immediately disciplined and later separated from the company. And the patient was reported to have been in good condition at the close of the incident.

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Emergency Response System

The emergency response system means that the first responders arrive on scene, on average, in about 4 minutes, with an ambulance crew arriving, on average, about 3 minutes after that. At Southwest Ambulance, we continually seek improvements to meet the needs of our fast growing community. We work closely with Fire Departments to identify additional opportunities to improve upon our service to the community.

Response Time Challenges

Despite the following challenges Southwest has met the standards for patient care.

- Fast growing communities spread over large geographic areas with “leapfrog development”
- Road construction
- Limited access points (roads) are just a few of the response time challenges for ALL emergency providers including police, fire and ambulance.

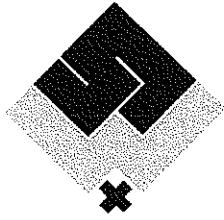
In newly developed communities away from the main population center, such as in the eastern and northern portions of the City of Surprise, we face an additional challenge of limited commercial space and existing zoning requirements to house our crew and ambulance.

Posting on Street Corners

Occurs in areas where we currently are without a sub-station. Corner Posting is a widely used strategic deployment strategy of placing ambulance crews in high volume areas during peak hours. Ironically, our company is one of the few, nationally, that do not have the majority of ambulances doing posting. The majority of our units respond out of stations.

Corner postings are necessary to be in position to keep response times as fast as possible in areas where we do not have a sub-station. Southwest constantly monitors call volume to anticipate need and to optimize peak time responses. The absolute longest time a crew is posted without relief is 4 hours. On average a crew sits on a corner for about 30 minutes before receiving a call.

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Employee Work Schedules

The hours that field employees work are based on a 56 hour work week, basically 10 days a month.

There are opportunities for more hours based on shift pick – ups (overtime). Employees' call into the scheduling department to find out what shifts are open for the upcoming pay period. Employees will then add hours to their own schedule by volunteering to work some of these open shifts.

Employees cannot work more than 48 hours a shift, which is normal in EMS, without taking a minimum of a 12-hour break. While on duty there are opportunities for sleep and rest.

Southwest Ambulance has a fatigue policy that allows employees to notify the on-duty manager if they are “too fatigued to perform his or her job in a safe manner”. The employee is then “removed for the remainder of the shift”.

City of Surprise

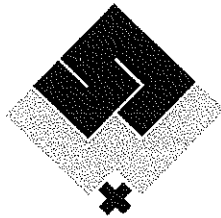
In the City of Surprise, we are in the leasing process for two new stations. One in the eastern portion and another in the western portion of the city.

This will give us three stations and spread our units throughout the City to give better coverage for responses. We have also upstaffed another 24-hour unit in the City.

Hotline

After my conversation with the Channel 5 investigative reporter, I directed that all calls made to the Company Hotline be brought to my attention. Calls to the hotline are confidential in nature and allows employee to make anonymous reports on any operational concerns that need to be addressed.

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Southwest Ambulance was recently honored with a "Business Excellence Award" from a local chamber of commerce. In selecting Southwest Ambulance for this prestigious award, the chamber cited that:

Southwest Ambulance "rose above the crowd" through business success, growth, community involvement, dedication to employees and commitment to customer service.

With more than 1200 employees and nearly 300 ambulances, Southwest Ambulance is one of the largest ambulance providers in the Western United States serving more than 25 communities.

Working in partnership with local Fire Departments, Southwest Ambulance provides the emergency medical transportation for residents while providing exemplary care to patients.

Southwest Ambulance is committed to working shoulder to shoulder with Fire Departments in maintaining and improving on a professional working relationship that always puts the needs of the citizens first.

Southwest Ambulance works hard every day to strengthen our community relationships and partnerships. We have a rich history of "Business Excellence" and a proud "Tradition of Caring" that extends beyond emergency transportation as demonstrated by:

- Our community involvement and participation in local organizations and causes.
- Our support and partnership of local Fire Departments in their community outreach and education efforts.
- Our commitment and dedication to our employees.

We have a nationally recognized customer service program and a seamless EMS system with Fire Departments.

Our Corporate Bottom Line Is...

We are committed to partnering with Fire Departments in providing the highest level of pre-hospital emergency assistance possible.

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