

Judge Weldon P. Cude
August 23, 2023

Atascosa County's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department has been diligently working to improve and expand its services to continue serving the community's needs. Under the leadership of EMS Director Courtney Grier, the department has undertaken several initiatives to ensure the well-being of Atascosa County residents, focusing on everything from advanced medical care to responding to everyday challenges. One significant endeavor is pursuing an Air Ambulance service based in Atascosa County. Atascosa County EMS recognizes the importance of swift medical interventions, especially in critical cases that require immediate transportation. Air Ambulance companies need specific data to substantiate the necessity for such a base. To meet this requirement, the EMS department has introduced a reporting field within their charting system, ensuring accurate data collection to showcase the demand for an Air Ambulance base. Though the outcome of this endeavor is not yet secure, the department's commitment to providing the best possible care remains steadfast. The EMS department's dedication to enhancing patient care is evident in its consistent equipment and medical supplies investments. The department has recently acquired new equipment for its ambulances that are designed to provide advanced critical care to patients. The department is now equipped with new advanced medications for addressing active heart attacks and respiratory emergencies. These additions signify the department's hands-on approach to staying informed about medical advancements, ensuring that patients receive the best possible care in their times of need. Responding to the increasing call volume within the County, the EMS department is expected to introduce a fifth ambulance in January. Investing in a new ambulance strengthens their response capabilities, providing more timely assistance to those in need. To engage with the community on a broader scale, residents can now catch a glimpse of the EMS ambulances at all Varsity Football Games. This presence reinforces the department's commitment to public safety and offers a sense of reassurance to attendees knowing that expert medical assistance is nearby during the Friday night lights. EMS is gearing up for community outreach as the upcoming Halloween season approaches. The stations will be open to trick-or-treaters, who can collect goodie bags while learning more about EMS's role in the community's safety and well-being.

It's worth mentioning that Ms. Grier has reported a noticeable increase in COVID-related calls, prompting the department to work closely with state authorities to secure extra personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies. The crews have implemented precautions for suspected COVID patients to prevent cross-contamination between calls. Crews must go out of service, run a special UV light in the ambulance, take showers, and wash their clothes before returning to service for additional calls. Under the guidance of Ms. Grier, Atascosa County's EMS department has witnessed great progress since she assumed her role in late Spring. Recently, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) conducted a survey, reaffirming this commitment to excellence and confirming the department's compliance with health and safety regulations. Atascosa County's EMS Department demonstrates its dedication and commitment to health and safety in our community. As they continue to pursue advancements in medical care, engage with the public, and navigate the challenges of an ever-changing landscape, the department's mission remains strong: to provide exceptional emergency medical services and contribute to the overall well-being of every resident in Atascosa County. If you have an opportunity to visit with our first responders, please thank them for their service. Our communities and County are a much safer place to live because of them. Together we are Atascosa Proud!