



PRESS RELEASE

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Rockford Fire Receives CAAS Accreditation

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rockford Fire Department has been granted accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) for its proactive compliance in meeting organizational and clinical ambulatory excellence standards.

This distinction makes Rockford Fire the first municipality in the state to be accredited both for ambulance and firefighter service, having previously received international accreditation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence, and one of less than 10 dually accredited departments in the nation.

The accreditation process included a nearly three-year evaluation of the department's entire emergency medical services (EMS) and examined more than 100 standards related to organizational policies and procedures, operational and administrative functions, and patient outcomes. Through the course of the accreditation process, the Rockford Fire Department worked with OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center as the city's EMS Resource Hospital to review and update the city's services, prepare and submit the application, and work with the interview team from CAAS.

“Rockford Fire is committed to continuous process improvement and ensuring we provide the citizens of the community with the highest level of service,” said Fire Chief Derek Bergsten. “The evaluation process recognizes our efforts to date and helped us to identify opportunities where we could better serve citizens. As a result, we have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of how we serve.”

OSF Saint Anthony EMS Medical Director, Dr. Jane Pearson stated “CAAS accreditation is a significant achievement. CAAS verified that the Rockford Fire Department met or exceeded the most stringent national standards in all operational, administrative and patient care areas, in personnel, equipment, policies and procedures, documentation, and community responsibility.”

Pearson continued, “The men and women of the Rockford Fire Department were key to successful completion of the accreditation process. The dedicated professional commitment to strive for gold standard practices has brought us to this achievement and will carry us into the future. Accreditation is important as it assures patients and the community that they can be confident that the Rockford Fire Department stands ready to provide quality patient care in a compassionate atmosphere in accordance with nationally accepted standards. It's an honor to be their EMS Medical Director.”

Rockford Fire receives more than 26,000 calls annually and receives an “outstanding” or “excellent” rating on 96 percent of customer surveys. The department is host to seven advanced life support ambulances and 223 paramedics who go through a rigorous 450 hours of classroom training and 500 hours of clinical and field internship training before they can become licensed. Some of the instruction includes specialized training in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric advanced life support, pre-hospital trauma life support, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

"I want to thank Chief Bergsten and all of our Rockford Fire Department team as well as OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center for the combined commitment to excellence and unwavering focus on improving health outcomes for the citizens we serve," said Mayor Larry Morrissey. "We are recognized among the very best fire departments nationally and our citizens can be extremely proud of this accomplishment."

CAAS is a not-for-profit commission established by the EMS industry to promote and encourage quality in the ambulance industry. CAAS accreditation signifies that an ambulance service provider has met the Gold Standard of Care deemed by the industry to be essential in the delivery of a modern EMS system. CAAS accredited agencies must adhere to strict industry standards that often exceed state and local requirements, and are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with the standards. Accreditation increases clinical, operational and safety performance while decreasing risk and liability to the organization.

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