



August 17, 2011

Honorable Mayor  
Common Council

Dear Honorable Mayor and Common Council:

**Communication from the Fire Chief recommending adoption of changes to the Municipal Code regarding Emergency Service Fees.**

Since the inception of the Ambulance billing fee program some 15 years ago, the charges for various ambulance services have been submitted on a regular basis as part of the annual budget process. The fees rarely change year to year. They are normally updated at three- to five-year intervals. The last time our ambulance fee structure was updated was about four years ago.

Another area that the fire department charges fees is for motor vehicle accidents. This was incorporated under the former Mayor and Chief Hilmer as a way to recover part of the cost of providing services at motor vehicle accidents. Most insurance companies have provisions within their insurance policies to cover these costs and the State of Wisconsin will reimburse municipalities up to \$500 for accidents occurring on State Highways.

This ordinance will codify standard operating practices that have been in place for many years in a way that will be readily accessible to city officials and residents of Racine. Additionally, in areas where there is a distinction between resident and non-resident fees, we define how those fees are applied. Again, simply codifying the practices that have been in place for years.

The ordinance also adds two new sections covering specialty team emergency response fees and reimbursement for major disasters. The specialty team's fees cover a number of areas including Hazardous Materials, Confined Space, Trench Rescue, Collapse Rescue and Rope Rescue. The other section provides a basis for cost recovery in the event of a major disaster. By having a fee schedule in place for major disasters, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse the City for the higher rate if provided for through the municipal code.

Key points of this ordinance include defining Ambulance and Fire Department services, codifying the fee structure for ambulance billings, codifying the fee structure for motor vehicle accidents, defining and codifying the fee structure for specialty emergency responses and codifying a fee structure for FEMA reimbursement during major disasters.

The fire department respectfully submits this for your consideration.

Steve Hansen, Fire Chief



An Ordinance creating subsections 38-20 through 38-25 of the Municipal Code relating to Emergency Services Fees.

### ***38-20 Ambulance and Fire Department Services***

The City of Racine Fire Department provides numerous emergency services to the Citizens of Racine and surrounding communities through Emergency Services contracts for service. Services provided include, but not limited to, fire suppression activities, Emergency Medical Services, Level A & B Hazardous Materials Response, Confined Space Rescue, Collapse Rescue, Trench Rescue, Water Rescue and Recovery, High & Low Angle Rescue and Fire Prevention Inspections.

Events that would require the initiation of an Emergency Medical Service bill for services provided:

- Basic Life Support call for assistance
- Advance Life Support call for assistance involving the need for skill levels above that of an Emergency Medical Technician Basic.
- Advance Life Support call for assistance involving life threatening or life ending emergencies
- Non-emergency request for assistance that does not require a medical evaluation or transport to a medical facility.

Events that would require the initiation of a billable fee:

- Vehicle fires on the street or private property
- Vehicles on fire as a result of an accident
- Spills and leaks of anti-freeze, oil, gasoline or diesel fuel, requiring actions on the part of fire fighters to minimize or eliminate the hazard
- Disconnection of vehicular power systems and batteries to minimize or eliminate hazards associated with live electrical systems
- The use of power and hand tools to gain entry to a vehicle for the removal of a patient or patients.
- The use and deployment of vehicle stabilization systems including air lifting bags, cribbing and air-shore systems
- Power wires down across a vehicle that requires the utility company to respond whether there is a trapped victim or not.

Events that would not require the initiation of a billable fee (separate billing for EMS as appropriate):

- Vehicular accidents where an Engine, Truck or Quint company is called for the specific purpose of assisting the Rescue Squad in patient care or handling.
- Vehicular accidents where it is determined that no hazards exist that require the intervention of fire fighters.
- Calls for vehicular Haz Mat (leaking fluids) where no action was taken and/or the call was unfounded.
- Calls for vehicle fires where no fire has occurred.



### **38-21 Definitions**

A medical emergency is an injury or illness that is acute and poses an immediate risk to a person's life or long-term health. These emergencies may require assistance of the fire department based Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) or Paramedics pre-hospital. Dependent upon the severity of the emergency and the quality of any treatment given; it may require the involvement of multiple levels of care, from EMT's to an emergency room physician through to specialist surgeon.

Any response to an emergency medical situation will depend strongly on the situation, the patient involved and availability of resources to help them. It will also vary depending on whether the emergency occurs outside of a medical care facility.

For emergencies originating outside of medical care facility, a key component of providing proper care is to summon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by calling for help. The Joint 911 Center will then dispatch fire department based EMT's or Paramedics along with appropriate support personnel depending on the magnitude of the medical emergency. The goal is to have fire department based emergency responders on scene in less than 8 minutes from the initiation of the call for help.

The principles of the chain of survival apply to medical emergencies where the patient has an absence of breathing and a heartbeat (Pulseless non-breather (PNB)). This involves the four stages of medical care: Early access, Early CPR, Early defibrillation and Early advanced life support.

#### **Basic Life Support (BLS)**

Emergency medicine - fundamental emergency treatment that is provided until more precise medical treatment can begin. The constellation of emergency procedures needed to ensure a person's immediate survival, including CPR, control of bleeding, treatment of shock and poisoning, stabilization of injuries and/or wounds and basic first aid.

#### **Advanced Life Support (ALS)**

A higher level of emergency medical care, usually provided by EMT-intermediates or paramedics. Typically ALS includes invasive techniques such as IV therapy, intubation and/or drug administration.

#### **Advanced Life Support Level 2 (ALS 2)**

In addition to ALS skills, ALS2 includes, but is not limited to, ventilatory support involving tracheal intubation, pharyngo-tracheal lumen airway, esophageal obturator airway, trans-tracheal catheter ventilation; Advance IV access including IO application, and external jugular venous access; Diagnostic testing including EKG interpretation; Advanced Treatment options with drugs or electro-conversion, and Advance perfusion support. Advanced Life Support Level 2 generally will involve life threatening or life ending emergencies.

**Motor Vehicle Accident** means any collision between two or more motor vehicles; a collision between a motor vehicle and personal or real property; a collision between a motor vehicle and a non-motor vehicle, including unlicensed vehicles.

**Hazardous Materials Emergency** means an occurrence or an event that involves the uncontrolled release or emanate threat of a hazardous material into the environment which creates the potential or possibility of harm to human health, property or the environment.



**Response** means any and all instances when one or more members of the Racine Fire Department are called out to the scene of an incident involving an emergency situation that is beyond the capabilities of local first responders and local emergency personnel. The emergency situation could involve the presence or suspected presence of a dangerous, hazardous or toxic substance, life threatening or life ending emergencies, fire, mass causality incidents, or specialty emergencies including, but not limited to, collapse rescue, confined space rescue, trench rescue, high or low angle rope rescue.

**Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)** is a mutual aid system developed by the fire service to allow fire departments who are experiencing an extraordinary community incident to call resources from surrounding communities to assist with the extraordinary community incident at no cost to the municipality. Under MABAS municipalities must be capable of covering more than 90% of the routine day-to-day calls utilizing internal resources. Also under MABAS, municipalities not only receive assistance for extraordinary incidents, but the municipality must share their internal resources with outlying municipalities experiencing extraordinary incidents. Not all internal resources of the fire department need to be made available through MABAS, especially those specialty resources that are above and beyond routine Fire and Emergency Medical Services needs.

### ***38-22 Ambulance Billings***

The following rate structure will be utilized when billing for Emergency and Non-Emergency responses to medically related calls for assistance received through the 911 Joint Dispatch Center.

- Invalid Assistance for non-emergency assistance where no transport or medical assistance is needed.
  - Basic fee for service **\$95**
- Basic Life Support response and transport to a medical facility
  - City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service Resident **\$425**
  - Non-Resident living outside the City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service **\$475**
- Advance Life Support response and transport to a medical facility
  - City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service Resident **\$600**
  - Non-Resident living outside the City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service **\$650**
- Advance Life Support Tier 2 response and transport to a medical facility
  - City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service **\$700**
  - Non-Resident living outside the City of Racine or Contracted Area of Service **\$750**
- Loaded mileage rate from the emergency scene or incident to the hospital
  - **\$10/mile**
- Billable Supplies including but not limited to the following:
  - Combi-tube intubation **\$90**
  - Defibrillation **\$100**
  - IV Therapy **\$60**
  - ET Intubation **\$90**
  - Routine disposables **\$40**
  - Oxygen Cannula (0-4 liters) **\$10**
  - Oxygen Mask (5+ liters) **\$15**



- Billable Supplies including but not limited to the following (continued):
  - Excessive weight patient over 400 pounds \$100
  - Blue Code drug resuscitation \$50
  - Blue Code Lucas Device \$100

The Fire Chief, in his/her sole discretion, shall have the authority to waive ambulance billing fees upon written request from a patient or a patient's estate based on the totality of the request which must include a declaration of financial hardship.

Be it further ordained that a contracted Fire and EMS billing agency is hereby directed to issue invoices for such emergency services and to collect such fees on behalf of the City of Racine and to deposit such fees in the City's general fund, which shall be used to purchase fire department equipment, fire department training, EMS training and supplies for the City of Racine Fire Department.

When appropriate, charges not collected shall be turned over to the Tax Refund Intercept Program (TRIP) or a collection agency at the discretion of the City of Racine.

### ***38-23 Vehicle Accident and Vehicle Fire Billing***

The following rate structure will be utilized when billing for incidents and/or accidents involving motor vehicles and motorcycles. Each vehicle involved will be billed for services provided or assistance rendered:

- Vehicle fire requiring a single fire engine response. Incidents determined to be incendiary in nature will not be billed.
  - **\$500**
- Motor Vehicle Accident Level 1 - Basic vehicle accident involving single or multiple vehicles where fire department personnel provide basic assistance for the elimination of basic hazards including: disconnecting vehicle electrical systems, minor spills of fluids including water, anti-freeze, oil and less than 1 gallon of fluid.
  - **\$200 per vehicle ill respective of fault.**
- Motor Vehicle Accident Level 2 - Advance vehicle accidents involving single or multiple vehicles where fire department personnel must provide basic heavy hand tools for extrication of trapped victims.
  - **\$300 per vehicle ill respective of fault.**
- Motor Vehicle Accident Level 3 – Advance vehicle accidents involving the use of power assisted extrication tools such as hydraulic cutters, hydraulic spreaders, air bags, stabilization devices, winches, anchoring systems, saws, plasma cutters and other highly-specialized equipment. This charge will also apply for significant fluid spills greater than 1 gallon of fluid.
  - **\$500 per vehicle ill respective of fault.**
- Additional costs may apply for the use of fire suppression foam on large fuel spills and the cost of a cleanup contractor to remove contamination caused by the leakage of fluids. Those costs will be billed at the current replacement cost of the supplies used.



Be it further ordained that a contracted Fire and EMS billing agency is hereby directed to issue invoices for such emergency services and to collect such fees on behalf of the City of Racine and to deposit such fees in the City's general fund, which shall be used to purchase fire department equipment, fire department training, EMS training and supplies for the City of Racine Fire Department.

When appropriate, charges not collected shall be turned over to the Tax Refund Intercept Program (TRIP) or a collection agency at the discretion of the City of Racine.

### ***38-24 Fire Department Special Services***

The following rate structure will be utilized when billing for emergency incidents requiring specialized skills provided by the Racine Fire Department. Fees will be billed to the municipality or company requesting the services unless the municipality or company contracts with the City of Racine Fire Department for these services. The municipality requesting the services will be responsible for recovery of costs from a responsible party. Fees will be used to cover equipment costs, personnel costs and the cost of supplies used during the incident. All supplies utilized will be billed at the current replacement rate. Personnel costs may also include overtime for personnel recalled.

- Hazardous Materials Level A Incident Response involving chemical, biological or nuclear emergencies not requiring Level-A Entry garments classified as Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS) requiring full suit encapsulation.
  - Minimum response will be Tactical Command, Special Teams 1 and personnel based on the incident assessment matrix.
  - On Duty personnel utilized for the response - \$3,000/hour from the time of dispatch until units are returned in quarters plus any supplies used.
  - On and Off Duty personnel utilized for the response due to the magnitude of the incident - \$3,000/hour plus \$50/hour per off duty personnel recalled from the time of dispatch until units and personnel are returned in quarters plus any supplies used.
- Hazardous Materials Level B Incident Response involving chemical, biological, or nuclear emergencies.
  - Minimum response will be Special Teams 1, and personnel based on the incident assessment matrix.
  - On Duty personnel utilized for the response - \$1,500/hour from the time of dispatch until units are returned in quarters plus any supplies used.
  - On and Off Duty personnel utilized for the response due to the magnitude of the incident - \$1,500/hour plus \$50/hour per off duty personnel recalled from the time of dispatch until units and personnel are returned in quarters plus any supplies used.
- Chemical Assessment Team Response for incidents involving chemical, biological or nuclear emergencies for which monitoring and non-physical assistance is provided
  - Minimum response will be Special Teams 1 and personnel, based on the incident assessment matrix.
  - On Duty personnel utilized for the response - \$1,000/hour from the time of dispatch until units are returned in quarters plus any supplies used.



- Collapse, Trench, or Confined Space Rescue Response - \$1,000 / /hour from the time of dispatch until the units and personnel are returned to quarters plus any supplies used.
- High and Low Angle Technical Rope Rescue Response - \$700/hour from the time of dispatch until the units and personnel are returned to quarters plus any supplies used.

Staffing levels for all Special Team emergency responses shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Racine Fire Department utilizing National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and Department of Homeland Security recommendations.

***38-25 Schedule of Equipment Rates for Major Disasters and Emergencies***

The following equipment rate schedule shall apply for Major Disasters or emergencies that occur in municipalities which are not covered by the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) contracts or where a State or Federal disaster has been declared. When not otherwise addressed, the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Schedule of Equipment Rates will be utilized. Costs will be billed from the initial dispatch time until the unit or units returns to quarters.

- Personnel Costs – Actual cost incurred including overtime and detailed on a separate worksheet. The detailed worksheet must show the employee, apparatus assignment, specific duties, time spent on the assignment, and payroll information.
- FEMA Cost Code 8041 - Ambulance..... \$50/hour plus staff
- FEMA Cost Code 8131 – Boat, Runabout 13’ x 5’ ..... \$25/hour plus staff
- FEMA Cost Code 8312 – Generator up to 43 kW (ST-1) ..... \$30/hour plus staff
- FEMA Cost Code 8692 – Truck, Fire pump capacity 1500 gpm .. \$150/hour plus staff
- FEMA Cost Code 8694 – Truck, Fire-Quint 75’ Ladder..... \$200/hour plus staff
- FEMA Cost Code 8695 – Truck, Fire-Ladder 100’ ..... \$230/hour plus staff
- Tactical Command Post (TC-1) ..... \$150/hour plus staff
- Special Teams 1 (ST-1) ..... \$200/hour plus staff