



“The Countrie it selfe, I must confesse is a very pleasant land, rich in commodities; and fertile in soyle...”

Samuel Argall, ca. 1609

County of Surry

45 School Street, P. O. Box 65
Surry, VA 23883

www.surrycountyva.gov

Phone: 757-294-5271

Fax: 757-294-5206

Board of Supervisors

Robert L. Elliott, Jr, Chair
Judy S. Lyttle, Vice Chair
Timothy Calhoun
Brenton J. Byrd
Breyon D. Pierce

Melissa D. Rollins
County Administrator

Surry County Press Release

The Surry County Volunteer Rescue Squad has been providing volunteer emergency medical care to the citizens of Surry County for nearly six decades. The Squad notified the County and the Virginia Department of Health in January 2023 that it would voluntarily be relinquishing its agency license with a termination date of April 9, 2023.

Changing times have overwhelmed volunteer organizations across the nation, and many jurisdictions both urban and rural face an extreme shortage of Emergency Medical Service volunteers. The required commitment to training hours and the need to be more available to answer increased calls for service has become increasingly difficult for people wishing to volunteer.

As a result, communities are forced to implement measures that would afford the ability to provide timely medical care to the critically ill and injured citizens. Due to the increased reduction in qualified volunteers over time, Surry County has heavily relied on mutual aid from surrounding localities. Isle of Wight and Sussex County answer nearly all of Surry's second calls for service or approximately 20% of the total call volume. Due to staffing challenges, the volunteer service has answered less than 2% of total calls in the past year. Mutual Aid agreements provide continued Emergency Medical care to citizens when the County's paid crew is committed to previous calls for service.

“The Board of Supervisors have not neglected residents but has been proactive and responsive so that citizens can continue to receive emergency medical response services although the volunteer system has not been operational,” Robert Elliott, Chair, Surry County Board of Supervisors.

“Take the Rural Route to Success”

To ensure that the citizens are receiving timely and responsive medical services, the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution at its July 7, 2022, meeting designating Surry County Emergency Medical Services (SCEMS) as the Designated Emergency Response Agency in Surry County upon receiving licensure.

On October 4, 2022, SCEMS met the requirements set forth by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Health and was recognized as an EMS Agency authorized to provide Ground Ambulance-ALS, and Ground Ambulance-BLS services, the first step in the process. The County's license became active on December 22, 2022.

Surry County is working diligently to grow SCEMS beyond paid staff and continues to develop and implement solutions to assist in providing the best possible emergency medical care to citizens considering rural community challenges:

- County Dispatchers are certified in Emergency Medical Dispatch which allows them to provide the caller with instructions on how to care for the individual in need until qualified Emergency responders arrive on scene.
- Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) devices are being installed in several locations throughout the County to include the Marina, Senior Center facility, and first-run Fire Engines. Emergency Management is coordinating with the Surry County Sheriff's Office to have AEDs on law enforcement response vehicles which would allow for quick deployment when time is of the essence.
- Surry County Emergency Management is developing volunteer opportunities for citizens from age 16 and up to create a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The CERT team will educate and train citizens throughout the County in basic First Aid, CPR/AED certification, basic fire suppression, search and rescue skills, and more. The department is seeking individuals interested in becoming Nationally Certified Emergency Medical Technicians and volunteers to serve with SCEMS upon completion of EMT training and certification through County sponsored EMT courses.

The Surry County Board of Supervisors, on the behalf of the community, appreciates the long-standing and passionate service commitment given by all members of the Surry Volunteer Rescue Squad (past and present) to County residents for nearly 60 years.

“Take the Rural Route to Success”