

Sunday, May 13, 2007

## Software to help dispatchers direct ambulances

Goal is speedy response times

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The Courier-Journal

Making sure ambulances are in the best positions to quickly respond to emergencies will get a little easier for dispatchers thanks to new software acquired by Metro Emergency Medical Services.

Officials are testing the program and expect MetroSafe dispatchers to begin using it soon. With the program, dispatchers will be prompted to relocate ambulances and paramedic units, known as fly cars, if too many units are out of service in a particular area.

"It provides the best coverage," said Maj. Merrille "J.R." Noe.

"Once it gets busy, it evaluates the whole county."

Dispatchers constantly monitor locations of ambulances and paramedic units to see who is in service and who might be busy on a run or at the hospital.

Now, dispatchers can ask units to move when they notice a shortage.

With the software, the computer will automatically flag situations where an ambulance should move and the dispatcher can set that in motion with a couple of keystrokes and a call to the ambulance.

EMS Director Neal Richmond said he expects the software to be another step in creating a "high-performance EMS system."

"The whole idea here is to execute a kind of pre-emptive strike, where we're always a few steps ahead of what's about to happen," Richmond said.

"Instead of relying on guesswork or the skill and experience of an individual dispatcher, the computer keeps track of our ambulances and fly cars, and moves them into position for the next medical emergency that's about to happen."

The software cost \$100,000 and was paid for with money set aside from the 911 emergency call system through MetroSafe, Richmond said.

Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson says the software should show great returns.

"This software is another forward step in building a data-driven EMS system and will translate into faster response times and more lives saved," Abramson said.

MetroSafe officials say the system could make things easier for dispatchers, who often juggle many incidents at once.

"Any tools we can use to enhance public safety ... is a good thing," said Debbie Fox, deputy director of MetroSafe Communications.

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