

SUSSEX COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

"Caring People. Quality Service"



INTRODUCTION

2025 Sussex County EMS Goals & Accomplishments

Implemented quantitative fit testing equipment to further enhance employee safety

- Upgraded cardiac monitors to LifePack35®
- Upgraded ventilators to Zoll Z-Vent®
- Upgraded training equipment to compliment new cardiac monitors and ventilators
- Obtained CAAS Re-accreditation
- Upgraded Narcotic security with Knox® Safe
- Designed and prepared a new build for Medic 101 station
- Onboarded a new Associate Medical Director
- Took delivery of Mass Care Bus

Sussex County Emergency Medical Services (SCEMS) continued its tradition of excellence in pre-hospital care in a year with multiple achievements. 2025 represented a year in which the focus of SCEMS was to upgrade technology and equipment. Cardiac monitors and ventilators were both upgraded to ensure that SCEMS has the equipment to provide the best possible care that the residents and visitors of Sussex County can receive. Narcotic storage and accountability have been redesigned to include a significant investment in

Knox® Safe's that allow for improved compliance and accountability. In collaboration with DEMA the department took delivery of a new Mass Care Bus that will serve as a rehab and treatment area for large events and scenes. The SCEMS competition team once again competed in the annual JEMS Games capturing silver. The American Heart Association again presented the GOLD Plus award to SCEMS for excellence in the care of cardiac and stroke patients.

Sussex County continues to see a large influx of visitors in the summer months. This increase in travel creates an ongoing barrier to an already increased call load during the summer months on the route one corridor. SCEMS continues to provide a summertime Medic 114 power unit which is deployed from in town Rehoboth.

REACCREDITATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITING AMBULANCE SERVICES



An ongoing project within Sussex County EMS is to ensure that it is exceeding the highest standards. 2025 brought SCEMS the opportunity to demonstrate to CAAS site visitors that our organization not only meets but exceeds the standards that CAAS requires to achieve their accreditation. This process includes electronic submissions, and a two-day site visit with two CAAS staff members which culminates in a tour of the county allowing CAAS staff to speak directly to our staff to ensure that the standards are met day-to-day.

CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

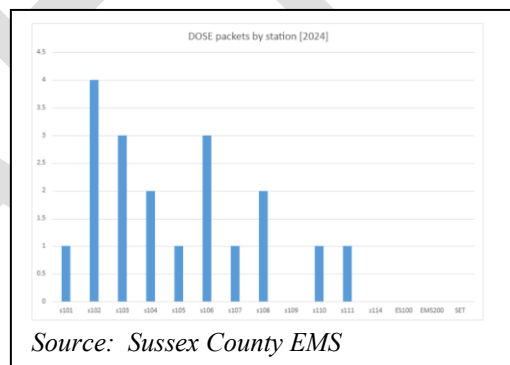
Whole Blood: In 2025, Sussex County EMS proudly continued its prehospital low titer whole blood program. Over the course of the year 38 patients in Sussex County have received blood, with several patients receiving additional units of blood products from DSP Aviation during transport. Continuously striving for improvement, we have updated our cooler device to the Delta® Cooler and continued to achieve a “zero waste” program by returning unused product.



Medical Director Scene Work: In 2025, Sussex County hosted both state and county medical directors for full day events. Medical directors rode fifteen days throughout the year where they were able to make it to scenes and provide direct support to the staff. These numbers do not include medical director responses from home or from the office while conducting their regular administrative duties.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

DOSE Program: Sussex County continues to pioneer the county-wide Direct On-Scene Education (D.O.S.E.) program that was established in 2015. In the previous nine years, Sussex County Paramedics have provided 242 families with potentially life-saving education to prevent infant sleep-related deaths. All EMS calls are quickly evaluated by Paramedics for potential educational or resource needs. When a child under the age of 12 months is identified by paramedics on the scene of an EMS or fire call, a D.O.S.E. packet is provided to the family. Each packet provides state resources and education on up-to-date safe-sleeping practices approved by the AAP. Additionally, if a dire situation is identified without a safe-sleeping space for each infant, a crib is immediately provided to the caregivers shortly after the 911 call. In total, eight cribs have been provided to Sussex County residents and visitors. The D.O.S.E. program continues to see success through routine participation and the spread of both education and awareness to the public during interactions with EMS services.



Sussex County Paramedics have been participating in this important initiative since 2021. Each year has seen an increase in the number of rescue kits distributed and individuals trained by our paramedics. In 2025, 75 kits were distributed, and 86 citizens were trained to manage an overdose.

PERSONNEL

Staffing: SCEMS entered 2026 with one vacancy. Eight (8) new paramedics were hired throughout the year, including two previous employees, who returned from other opportunities. SCEMS ended the year with one vacancy. Eight employees separated from the department throughout the year including two retirees. 2025 concluded with ten employees having more than 25 years of service and are eligible for retirement. SCEMS appreciated a turnover rate of about 7% (excluding retirees 5%) while the EMS industry often sees an annual rate of 20-30%.

In addition to the paramedic candidates, SCEMS also brought on board six paramedic students. Currently, five of these students have successfully attained paramedic credentials. SCEMS plans to continue with additional students in future cohorts.

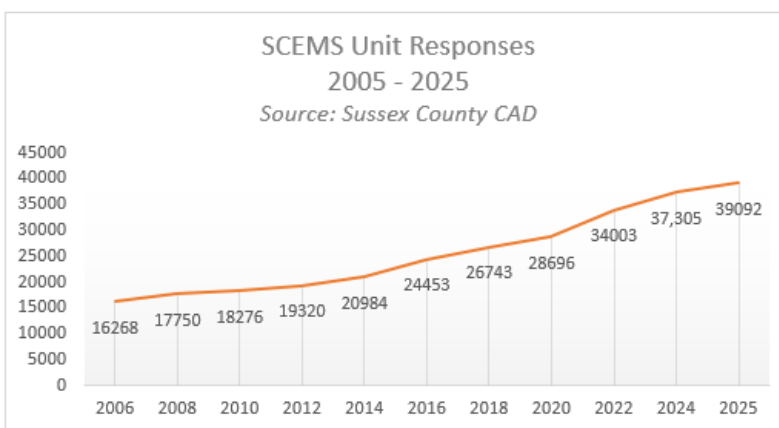
Employee Wellness: Employee mental health, wellness and resiliency remained a priority during 2025. All employees attend an appointment with a mental health professional as part of the biennial medical evaluation process. This provider in consultation with our occupational health medical provider will determine an employee's fitness for duty. As appropriate, the provider may be involved in return-to-work decisions. A new application "The Guide" was provided to our responders to assist with mental wellness.

2025 INCIDENTS

For 2025, SCEMS experienced a 5% increase in response volume compared to last year. Over the past ten years, a 68% increase in unit responses has been appreciated. This demand has continued to be met with eleven paramedic units, including two single medic 24-hour stations in Bridgeville and Milton, and a full-time day shift only single medic in the Roxana area. For the third year, these full-time units were supported by a summertime "power unit" in Dewey Beach to help address the call volume and difficulty navigating the Route 1 corridor between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

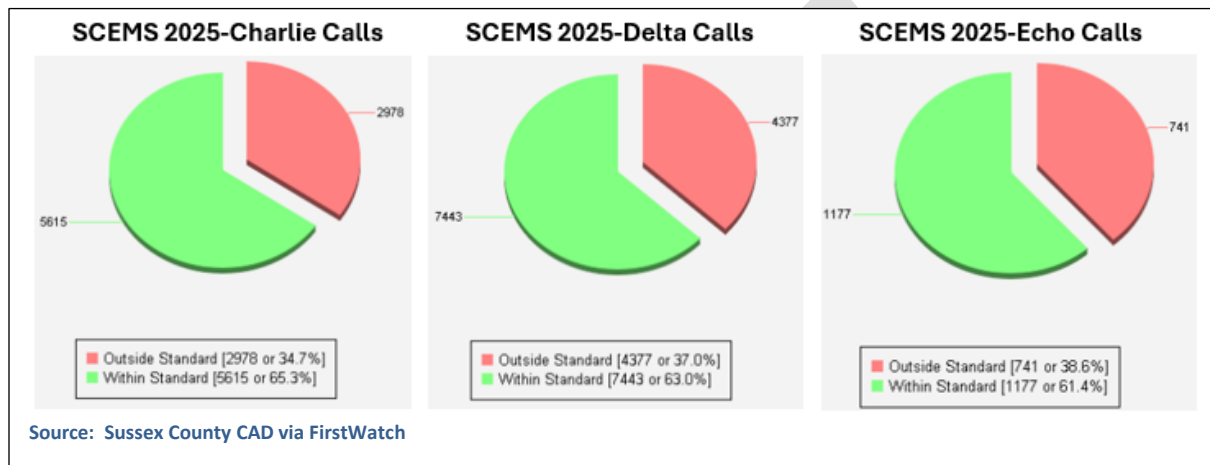
2025 Incident Responses		Δ Last Year
EMS 100 (Eastern Supervisor)	1,523	1%
EMS 200 (Western Supervisor)	1,287	5%
Medic 101 (Lincoln)	3,628	13%
Medic 102 (Laurel)	2,726	-5%
Medic 103 (Dagsboro)	3,788	4%
Medic 104 (Lewes)	5,356	7%
Medic 105 (Millville)	2,883	7%
Medic 106 (Long Neck)	4,490	17%
Medic 107 (Bridgeville)	1,572	3%
Medic 108 (Georgetown)	3,321	3%
Medic 109 (Summer "Power Unit")	1,106	1%
Medic 110 (Seaford)	4,256	3%
Medic 111 (Milton "Power Unit")	2,046	2%
Medic 114 (Dewey "Power Unit")	559	-12%
Special Operations	185	-26%
Other (Administration)	366	6%
Total	39,092	5%

Incident Responses by Unit (Source: Sussex County CAD)



Medic 109: In 2025, Medic 109 had its second full year as a full-time day shift unit stationed in the Southeastern portion of Sussex County along Lighthouse Road in Roxana. Medic 109 provides a valuable resource to an area that continues to grow and expand. Medic 109's response volume increased as expected with the year-round deployment.

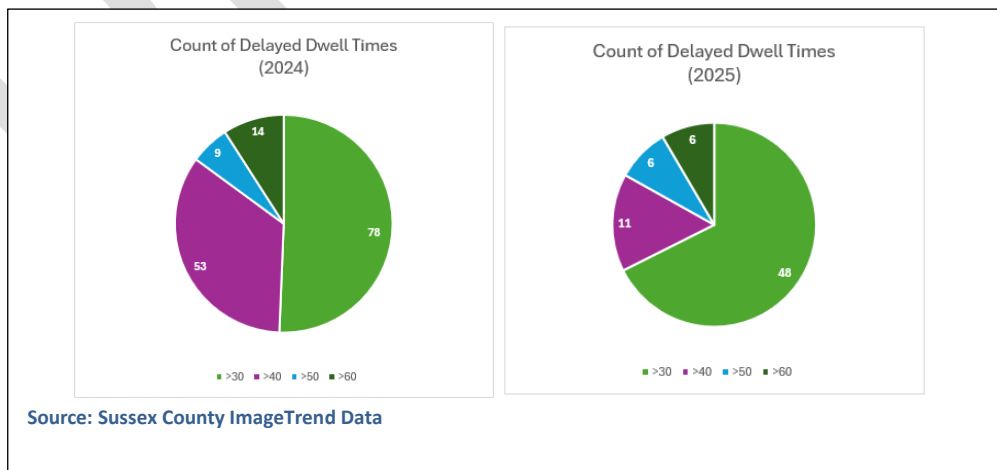
Response Times: Meeting the goal of an 8-minute response time continues to be a challenge in Sussex County. Our geography continues to be the greatest barrier. While response times are evaluated based on EMD code, compliance with an 8-minute standard is consistent between Charlie, Delta, and Echo responses.



Our Patients: Sussex County continued to welcome visitors throughout the year, approximately 8.9% of our patients for 2025 resided outside of Sussex County. This represents an increase of 1.8% from 2024.

Dwell Times: An issue in Sussex County is the time it takes to transfer patient care to hospital staff after a patient arrives at the emergency department. This has been termed our Dwell Time. Hospitals often refer to this as *wall time*. In 2025, SCEMS arrived at a local hospital with a patient 14,115 times. Our dwell times vary due to a multitude of factors, with most patients being transferred in under twenty minutes.

However, we did experience 71 times that required a unit to be at a hospital for greater than 30 minutes to facilitate a transfer of care. In fourteen cases, a SCEMS unit



had a dwell time exceeding one hour. The dwell time issue really began during the COVID pandemic when hospitals were at maximum capacity. The challenge today is that when EMS is

busy, hospitals are also busy. However, our paramedics need to transfer care in a reasonable timeframe so that they may return to service and be available for the next incident. 2024 saw the implementation of an emergency transfer policy in partnership with area hospitals and the Office of EMS. In 2025 the policy was implemented three times. One of the implementations was secondary to call volume/call criticality.

AWARDS

2025 AHA Mission: Lifeline: In 2025 Sussex County EMS continued its tradition of providing care at the level of “Gold” and were again awarded the American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline award. The award is a voluntary quality metric that allows the American Heart Association to recognize prehospital agencies for the hard work that they provide ensuring that their citizens are being treated at the highest level of care.



SCEMS Competition Team at the 2025 JEMS Games (Source: SCEMS).

JEMS Games: The SCEMS competition team returned to compete at the 2025 FDIC JEMS Games in Indianapolis, IN. This year the team earned a silver medal. The final scenario involved a rural farm setting with a complex entrapment of a patient in a grain style auger. The scene was complicated by several additional patients as well as a very emotionally charged scene involving family members of the critically injured patient.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Special Operations: SCEMS provided ALS coverage during 134 mass gatherings, public education events, Honor Guard duties, over the course of 2025. These events were staffed by 332 paramedics, contributing more than 2,000 hours. The SCEMS Honor Guard continues to increase attendance at funerals, public events, the EMS Memorial Bike Ride and presenting the colors at the DVFA Conference. 2025 saw the hazmat team respond to 3 incidents in addition to their quarterly drills. SCEMS placed a mass care unit in service that will be utilized during special events, mass casualty, and fire scene rehab incidents.



SCEMS mass care unit. Source: SCEMS

EDUCATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): The SCEMS CQI program remains a robust process and a contributing factor to our clinical success. The process is demanding, time-consuming, and incredibly valuable to the quality of care delivered by SCEMS paramedics. As we transition into FirstPass®, the rules-based system will require less field provider involvement, leverage the

automation of the program, and direct a more focused approach by field training officers and administrative personnel in the CQI process.

Continuing Education: The Continuing Education (Con Ed) program saw 9 Con Ed months with 36 sessions conducted in 2025 to meet annual education, competency, and compliance requirements. Training began with required AHA certifications (BLS, PALS, ACLS) and progressed through clinical assessment, simulation, infection control, airway competency, trauma education, and operational skills such as vehicle operations, forcible entry, and safety compliance. Two training periods represented significant systemwide milestones:



2025 Ventilator Training at PSC
(Source: SCEMS)

- May 2025 – Zoll Z-Vent Deployment: Education focused on ventilator setup, troubleshooting, and clinical application. Providers received airway-focused instruction and hands-on training emphasizing use during cardiac arrest, ROSC, and respiratory failure, ensuring competency prior to field deployment.
- August 2025 – LP-35 Monitor Deployment: Training centered on orientation and integration of the LP-35 monitor, including monitoring, defibrillation, pacing, and workflow transition. Scenario-based education ensured seamless adoption of the new platform without interruption to patient care.

Additional education throughout the year reinforced cardiac care, vascular access, medical devices, radios, trauma management, first-pass intubation performance, protocol updates, Blood Comm training, and Medical Director–led recertification, supporting continuous clinical readiness and operational excellence.

VFIS – Emergency Vehicle Driver Instructor: To better prepare our staff, SCEMS hosted a driver instructor course. This course was attended by members of SCEMS staff as well as BLS/Fire partners from in and around the county.

NAEMSP Quality Course: To increase efficiency and standardize the processing of data, SCEMS committed to send all members of the quality and standards division, in addition to our medical director, through the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) Year-long Quality & Safety Course. The course was completed in July and a poster presentation was prepared for the 2026 NAEMSP conference.

Paws for People: During each Con Ed day, SCEMS welcomes several visitors from the Paws for People program. The pups make their rounds visiting paramedics and dispatchers. Looking at the smiles on faces and wagging of tails, it is hard to tell who is happier- the medics or the dogs! This program has been well received and has been a high point of the day and contributes to employee happiness.



Sim Participants hotwash.
(Source: SCEMS).

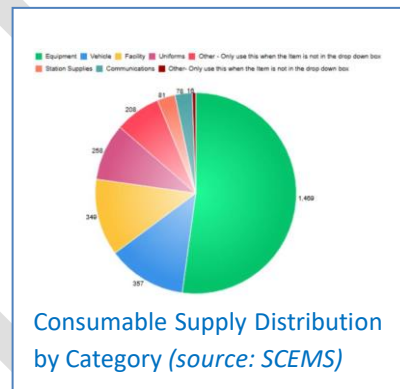
Simulation Program: In 2025, the simulation program completed 69 formally evaluated simulation sessions, all conducted as scheduled simulation events. These sessions were supported by designated Simulation Operators and Technicians and formally evaluated by FTOs, ensuring standardized oversight and consistency across all scenarios. Post-simulation feedback was collected via an anonymous survey, yielding 63 completed responses. Our simulation participated with external organizations such as: Del Tech respiratory and nursing programs, Milford School District EMT program, and the DE State Fire School EMT program.

LOGISTICS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

Logistics: SCEMS continues to be supported by a five-person Logistics Division that oversees and coordinates station, equipment, vehicle purchasing, maintenance, and employee uniforms. In 2025, they handled 2,816 requests for service and repairs. Additionally, our Logistics Division purchased, processed, and distributed 41,233 requests for consumable medical supplies. This represents a 2.9% decrease compared to 2023 utilization.

Response Ready Fleet: Seven ALS response Suburban's and one pickup truck for the Special Operation's Division was placed in service. Our fleet drove 583,056 miles, a 1 % increase using 43,029 gallons of fuel for an average of 13.55 miles per gallon.

Paramedic Station Updates: 2025 saw planning and continued construction for a new paramedic station in Lincoln and Dewey Beach. The new Medic 114 joint municipal complex in Dewey Beach is currently under construction while the Medic 101 station should begin the bid process in early 2026.



SUMMARY AND A LOOK AT 2026 GOALS

This past year was a milestone for Sussex County EMS. We upgraded our pre-hospital cardiac monitors as well as our ventilators. Sussex County EMS has worked with our hospital and OEMS partners to improve hospital delays. Increased communication and the development of an emergency transfer policy have resulted in improvements in dwell times at all facilities. All SCEMS activities are completed with our motto of "Caring People, Quality Service" in mind. As we look forward to 2026, SCEMS will be looking to update its video laryngoscopy device. Construction for a new Medic 101 station should begin in early 2026 with an expected completion of spring 2027. A new home for Medic 114 in Dewey Beach will continue to be constructed as a part of a shared complex with the Dewey Beach town hall and police station. Plans for new Medic 111 (Milton) stations will follow.

2026 Goals and Initiatives

- Begin construction of Medic 101 station in Lincoln
- Expand data mining through FirstWatch®
- Expand the hours of operation of Medic 109 to 24 hours a day
- Explore replacement video laryngoscopy devices for aging AirTraq®
- New temporary 114 station in Rehoboth
- Update and expand fleet with new vehicle design
- Update onboarding software and expand to capture annual clinical assessment of current certified staff

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