



Ruling On Release of Information Expected

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newspaper has moved to have Wisconsin Attorney General J.P. Van Hollen review the Waukesha Fire Department's practice of keeping ambulance reports secret. Waukesha Fire had maintained that the information is protected under the Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) while the newspaper asserts that multiple items are not HIPAA protected and should be released upon request. Since the AG filing, the fire department has reversed itself and provided the requested information. The ruling, once released, will likely apply to most EMS organizations throughout Wisconsin.

AB-88 Passes Committee

One of the first EMS bills for the year has passed the House floor and moved into the Senate. AB-88 seeks to create a First Responder license plate, similar to current Wisconsin EMT and Firefighter plates.

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Taser Used To Subdue Diabetic Patient With Low Blood Sugar

Police in Portland, Oregon's use of a stun gun on a woman who went into diabetic shock has touched off a controversy that both law enforcement and the medical community agree there is no good answer for.

The officer responded to an EMS call to help paramedics and firefighters with a "violent person suffering from some type of diabetic episode." Shortly after entering the home the patient punched the officer in the chest without provocation. As the officer and firefighters began struggling with the 5-foot-2-inch, 140-pound woman, she kicked and punched several of them. It was at this time that the officer decided to use his stun gun to control the situation.

"She's shaking, and he's yelling 'I'll do it again if you don't put your arms behind your back,'" said the roommate of the diabetic patient. Both now say they are afraid to call 911 in the future.

"Her condition is something we see frequently. It's the kind of thing that law enforcement should be better equipped to deal with," said Dr. Andrew Ahmann, director of the Diabetes Center at OHSU Hospital. "Certainly, in the majority of cases, one would be able to restrain a person at least to give them an injection," said Ahmann. "We all would have preferred if there was a way they could have subdued her without using the Taser. I've never heard of a case quite like this before,"

Wrongful Death Suit Filed Against Ambulance Service and EMT/Driver

A man whose wife died two days after colliding with an ambulance in 2005 has filed a wrongful death lawsuit alleging the Wisconsin ambulance service and the driver were both negligent in allowing the crash to occur.

Gregg Theune and the estate of his wife filed suit in Waukesha County Circuit Court against Kettle Moraine Ambulance in Waukesha, and one of its then-employees, Jennifer Dalleska, who was driving the ambulance.

Dalleska, who has since moved out of state, was 22 at the time the crash occurred. The ambulance service was transporting a physician and two

nurses along with another EMT to pick up a patient at Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital for a transfer to Waukesha Memorial Hospital.

According to reports, Lucinda Theune was driving her car east on Highway 18 on April 8, 2005, and entered the intersection at Highway TT after having a green light. The Kettle Moraine ambulance was heading north on TT using red lights and siren when it went through a red light and slammed into Theune's car.

Dalleska was later convicted of Driving Too Fast for Conditions and Operator Violate Red Traffic Light, both traffic violations. She paid total fines of \$647.

Statistics show that the most dangerous location for an emergency vehicle is at an intersection, which is also where the most serious accidents occur.

Joint Finance Committee Discusses Restoring EMS Office Positions

The Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee has discussed the need for funding and restoring the recently cut positions of first responder coordinator and the data coordinator in the State EMS Office. The discussions came about after a motion was entered to transfer approximately \$300,000 in unused fire dues money into the state EMS office.

Both Senator Judy Robson and Rep. Kitty Rhoades agree that these positions need to be restored. Unfortunately, they disagree with where that funding should come from.

Following pressure from the fire service and the technical college system, the motion was defeated along party lines in an 8-8 tie.

As part of the discussion, the importance of maintaining support for EMS throughout Wisconsin was reiterated many times including by Rep. Rhoades who vowed to continue to work on finding a funding source to restore the positions cuts.

Currently the first responder duties are being handled by the EMT-Basic coordinator, while the data coordinator position is essentially vacant. Brian Litza had been fulfilling a portion of those duties until being named section chief in April. Until a replacement is found for his position, limited work is being done with the WARDS system, even though the deadline for all ambulance services to provide data to the state remains set for the end of this year.