

Upcoming Training & Meetings:

12/29/2015 **FINAL 2015 CPR Makeup** @ Ron Richeson Training Facility 1pm

12/29/2015 **FINAL 2015 OTEP Makeup** @ Ron Richeson Training Facility 7pm

2016 BLS OTEP Calendar

The 2016 BLS OTEP Calendar for the first quarter is on the website as well included in the newsletter. There are still some departments that have NOT turned in their training dates for 2016. Please email your department's requested dates to Michelle as soon as possible. mlbrisson@co.skagit.wa.us If you have any questions or concerns regarding training please contact Kevin Chao directly at kchao@co.skagit.wa.us or 360-416-1835.

RECRUITING FOR NEW SUPPORT OFFICERS

The Support Officer program – a division of the Skagit County Fire Chiefs Association – is structured to provide the service of caring for the victim's family while the first responder attends to the victim and/or events of the crisis, fire, accident, etc. The program provides liaison between the victim/family of the crisis and other support agencies and facilitate family contact with the clergy of their choice and/or additional close family or friends. The Support Officer serves independently, nondenominationally and without comprise of personally held beliefs and convictions. If would like to join this caring organization, please contact coordinator **Ervin Lindall** at 708-5536 for an application and further information.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Review of Marysville Pilchuck High School Active Shooter Response
Scott Goodale, Battalion Chief of Marysville Fire Department

When: Tuesday, January 5th 2016 @ 11:00am

Where: Skagit Station Meeting Room

105 E. Kincaid St., Mount Vernon

Who: All Providers

RSVP to Kevin Chao kchao@co.skagit.wa.us

Advanced Medical Life Support Provider Course

When: January 16 & 17, 2016

Where: Ron Richeson Training Facility,
2911 E. College Way, Mount Vernon

Who: All Providers

****See Attached Flyer****

EMS for Children Conference sponsored by North Region EMS

When: February 18, 2016

Where: McIntyre Hall, Skagit Valley College

Who: All Providers

****See Attached Flyer****

2016 1st Quarter BLS OTEP Schedule

training dates/times subject to change

1/4/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Cedardale Station
1/14/2016	CPR/Backboard Refr.	1900	Concrete FD
1/14/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	McLean Rd. FD
1/14/2016	First Aid	1900	Guemes Island
1/14/2016	CPR/Code Review	1330	MVFD
1/20/2016	CPR/Code Review	1800	Aero Skagit
1/20/2016	CPR/Code Review	1830	Fire Dist. 6
1/21/2016	CPR/Code Review	1330	MVFD
1/25/2016	First Aid	1900	Allen Station
1/28/2016	CPR/Code Review	1330	MVFD
2/1/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Conway Station
2/8/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Allen Station
2/9/2016	Code Review	1900	Bayview FD
2/11/2016	OTEP #1	1900	McLean Rd. FD
2/11/2016	OTEP #1	1330	MVFD
2/15/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Samish Island Station
2/17/2016	CPR/Code Review	1800	Anacortes FD
2/18/2016	OTEP #1	1330	MVFD
2/22/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	SWFD
2/25/2016	OTEP #1	1330	MVFD
3/1/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Lake Cavanaugh

3/3/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Guemes Island
3/9/2016	Otep #1	1900	Fire Dist. 13 Clear Lake FD/Big Lake FD/ Day Creek
3/15/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	FD
3/16/2016	Otep 1	1800	Anacortes FD
3/30/2016	Otep #1	1800	Aero Skagit
3/21/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Punkin Center
3/28/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Mt. Erie
3/28/2016	CPR/Code Review	1900	Hickson Station

Department of Emergency Medical Services

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There's been a lot of talk lately about "ALS" and "BLS"... what does it all mean?

Whenever Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is discussed, we often hear the terms **paramedic** and **emergency medical technician (EMT)**, however you may also hear the acronyms **ALS** and **BLS**.

ALS stands for advanced life support. Our ALS system is comprised of 73 **paramedics** who have received more than 1,600 hours each of training in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric life support, severe trauma and other life-threatening emergency medical conditions. Paramedics can also administer over 30 advanced medications and medical procedures.

BLS stands for basic life support. The 300+ **EMTs** that are members of the career and volunteer fire departments are the backbone of our EMS system. EMTs have completed over 200 hours each of classroom and practical education in trauma care, cardiac and stroke care, CPR, advanced first aid, and more.

When 9-1-1 is called, dispatchers obtain important information to determine the nature of the emergency and the level of service (ALS or BLS) that is required. The closest emergency unit, whether it is an ALS or BLS ambulance, or a fire engine, will be dispatched to assist. Having the closest unit respond allows for the emergency to be rapidly stabilized and treatment to begin quickly. This type of system is referred to as a "**tiered response system**." A tiered response system allows for the fastest response time possible and provides the necessary amount of responders to handle the emergency.

So do some EMS calls only receive BLS response?

Typically, no. Skagit County has historically sent an ALS ambulance with a minimum of one paramedic and one EMT to every EMS call. The most common exception is when EMS call volume exceeds available resources and all seven EMS levy funded ALS ambulances are busy on other calls.

What is BLS integration?

BLS integration is simply using existing BLS ambulances to transport patients who do not require any ALS interventions to the Emergency Room. This allows for patients to receive an ALS evaluation by a paramedic, however if no further ALS care is needed based on clinical findings, BLS responders can safely transport the patient and allow the ALS ambulance to become available for additional EMS calls that may require ALS interventions.

Why do we need BLS integration?

The average number of EMS calls varies significantly by the time of day; however the number of EMS levy funded ALS ambulances on duty is the same 24/7. This means that at times there are potentially more calls than ambulances available. 91% of the times when all four ALS ambulances in the central valley are simultaneously handling EMS calls occur between 9am and 9pm. Additional ALS ambulances must then respond from Anacortes or Concrete. However, by using available fire department BLS ambulances to transport BLS patients, the paramedics can be back in service and available for the next EMS call much sooner.

Additionally, the combination of a growing population and more and more Baby Boomers reaching retirement age in Skagit County means our annual EMS call volume will continue to grow. Unfortunately, Skagit County is already well above the state and national averages for both Medicare and Medicaid enrollment. These programs do not cover the full cost of delivering high quality EMS. Our system is already stressed during certain parts of the day and the trend will only grow unless we add additional transport resources.

Is this done anywhere else?

Most definitely! Our neighbors to the north and south in Whatcom, Snohomish and King Counties all routinely use BLS ambulances to transport BLS patients and have done so for years. These counties also utilize Criteria Based Dispatching (CBD) to send *just* BLS ambulances to the lowest acuity 9-1-1 calls, thus keeping paramedics available for the most critical EMS calls.

Are there other benefits?

Aside from keeping our paramedics available for the most serious EMS calls in which their advanced training is required, BLS integration also provides for:

- ***More engaged and experienced EMTs.*** Whether it's a small increase in demand for transport ambulances during peak hours on a daily basis, or a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) like a bridge collapse or a twenty car pile-up on I-5, the more experienced our EMTs are when the need arises, the better care they can deliver.
- ***Paramedics are able to focus on ALS skills.*** Too few critical patient contacts by paramedics can potentially lead to ALS skills degradation. Having paramedics transport patients which require no ALS interventions reduces their availability for other ALS calls. Multiple peer-reviewed studies have shown that the best way to keep paramedic skills sharp is by having them focus on the most critical of patients.
- ***Paramedics are more available for critical calls in the rural areas.*** Rural residents in Skagit County are served by volunteer fire departments where there is greater variation in first responder response times and number of responders depending on time of day, since many volunteers have full time work obligations in addition to volunteering to serve their neighbors. Skagit 9-1-1 dispatch data also shows that while rural residents don't call for EMS as often, when they do the calls tend to be more severe. For both these reasons it just makes sense to use the available staffed BLS ambulances to transport BLS patients when possible so that the paramedics are available for the rural areas when needed. For example, we don't want a cardiac arrest patient in Big Lake waiting for an ALS ambulance to respond from Burlington or Sedro-Woolley because the ALS ambulance stationed in Mount Vernon is busy transporting a BLS patient.

Is this taking money away from ALS or reducing the number of paramedics?

Absolutely not. In fact, with the addition of an EMS levy funded 24-hour-a-day Medical Services Officer (MSO), there are now more ALS resources on duty every day than at the end of our last levy cycle. Total EMS levy funding to ALS agencies for operations has increased by 46.8% between 2012 and 2016. In addition to increased operational funding, EMS levy funding for capital purchases has also provided for 5 new ALS ambulances (\$200,000 each) and 12 new ALS cardiac monitor defibrillators (\$34,000 each) between 2013 and 2015. In 2016 the EMS levy is funding 2 more ALS ambulances (\$200,000 each), 12 Video Laryngoscopes (\$6,000 each) and 12 Transport Ventilators (\$12,000 each).

Does this mean every fire district / department will begin doing BLS transports?

No. Most fire districts in Skagit County are rural and staffed by volunteers – neighbors helping neighbors. They simply do not have the capacity to routinely transport patients. However the larger departments with fulltime staffing do have the resources to transport BLS patients. In 2014, over 75% of the patients requiring BLS transport were in the areas covered by these departments. So ALS ambulances will continue to transport BLS patients from many rural areas; however where BLS resources are available to transport BLS patients, ALS resources can be more readily available for critical calls.

We hope this answers your questions about BLS Integration. For more information, or if you have additional questions, please call us at 360-416-1830.

Advanced Medical Life Support

What is Advanced Medical Life Support? Advanced Medical Life Support (AMLS) is the leading prehospital advanced medical assessment and treatment program that offers a "think outside the box" diagnosis methodology and is endorsed by the National Association of EMS Physicians. This course is open to all ALS and BLS personnel.

Date: January 16-17, 2015

Time: 9am to 5:30pm

**Location: Ron Richeson Training Facility, Skagit 911 Center
2911 E. College Way Mt. Vernon, WA 98273**

Cost: FREE for all area providers

16 hours of CME provided

Course open to all ALS and BLS Providers and ER Nurses

Cost Includes: Course Certification, lunch and refreshments provided on both days.

**There are a limited number of seats available for this class.
Please register early to guarantee a spot.**

Registration Deadline: January 13th, 2015

To register please send email to: joelp@co.skagit.wa.us



**Skagit County Medic One
2911 E. College Way, Suite C
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273
Phone 360-416-1830
<http://www.skagitcounty.net>**

SAVE THE DATE

EMS for Children Conference
Thursday, February 18th, 2016
McIntyre Hall, Skagit Valley College
Mount Vernon, WA

Conference Registration:

Register Online by visiting: www.northregionems.com

Registration Fee:

\$40.00 if paid by or on January 1st, 2016

\$50.00 if paid after January 1st, 2016

How to pay:

Pay on our website via PayPal with a Credit or Debit card at: www.northregionems.com

Send a check to: North Region EMS & TCC, PO Box 764, Burlington, WA 98233

Send a request to invoice your agency or department: request@northregionems.com

Who Should Attend?

Pre-hospital providers including First Responders, EMTs, Intermediate Life Support personal and Paramedics. Hospital providers including Emergency Department Nursing Staff and Physicians.



MCHB/NHTSA

The goal of the EMS for Children's Conference is to enhance the pediatric capabilities of the WA State EMS and Trauma System and to solidify the integration of pediatric focus within that system.

This conference is made possible by a grant from Washington State Department of Health EMS for Children's program and supported by the North Region EMS & Trauma Care Council.

