

Odessa (DE) Fire Company (2011 CFSI Award Recipient) (Volunteer)

The Odessa Fire Company is a volunteer fire, rescue and EMS agency located in southern New Castle County, Delaware. Odessa did not have an ambulance service until 1998, when an increase in population warranted the need for the service. The department currently operates two units that run 24/7 in conjunction with the local Advanced Life Support service.

Odessa stresses training and certification for all its members. Each member must maintain both state and national credentials in order to ride in an ambulance. In addition, all new members of the department must perform First Responder training while existing members are encouraged to obtain the training.

Safety of both the patient and the provider is a primary concern for the department, and this is clearly evident in the design of both ambulance units. Purchased in 2004, each unit is equipped with a Holmatro battery-operated vehicle extrication/cutting tool. This allows ambulance personnel to gain access to trapped victims if rescue apparatus is late to arrive on the scene. Both units are also equipped with Stryker Power Pro automated stretchers for ease of lifting patients into the units. In 2009, the department purchased two Zoll Auto Pulse units using Impact Fee money (funds allocated to the department from the building of new homes). These devices enable continuous chest compressions on heart attack victims while the provider remains seated in a moving ambulance.

In 2010, Odessa purchased a new ambulance, this one featuring many new safety designs. The unit has seats facing forward. The department installed a three-point harness rather than a five-point to encourage usage. Safety items including indicator lights in the patient compartment to signal turns and braking were also installed, as were video cameras to monitor traffic on the sides of the vehicle as well as on the back.

Odessa also has led an effort to place carbon monoxide patient monitors throughout the state. This effort resulted in being awarded a \$420,000 AFG regional grant and 150 Masimo RAD-57 units to be placed across the state. This gave the state of Delaware the ability to detect toxic carbon monoxide levels in firefighters.

Odessa is a small company when compared to others in the state; but it is a giant in providing the highest level of both patient and responder safety.