

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Brown County

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PAUL A. FONTECCHIO, P.E.
DIRECTOR

TO: County Board via 2021 Annual Report
FROM: Paul Fontecchio, P.E.
DATE: January 19, 2022
RE: Emergency Response Crew Summary

Background:

Brown County Public Works proposed a new Emergency Response Crew (ERC) for non-winter emergency call-ins in August of 2016 which was implemented in January 2017. In the past, Public Works followed a procedure for emergency call-ins based primarily on employee seniority. This procedure led to instances where it sometimes took over an hour of phone calls before an employee/s started to head to the office for trucks and equipment. This was an unacceptable situation when police and/or fire personnel were requesting assistance with traffic control and other emergency situations on state, county, and town roadways. The idea was for the new ERC to be significantly more responsive.

ERC Details:

- Each week we have three highway crew employees on emergency stand-by.
- A minimum of one sign shop crew will be on the ERC each week so that we have the needed technical expertise for closing more complicated roadways such as I-41.
- Each ERC member takes a pickup truck home the week they are on stand-by. The pickup truck is equipped with truck mounted arrow boards, chemical cleanup material for spills (oil dry), traffic cones, stop and yield signs and posts, chainsaw, tools, etc. for basic emergency call-in requests.



Improved Response Time:

- An on-call superintendent only needs to make calls to the three employees on stand-by instead of calling 30 or 40 employees (or more) based on seniority. This has reduced the response time by 30 minutes (typically) and up to an hour in worst case scenarios.
- ERC members do not need to go to the shop first for materials or equipment since they have a prepped county truck at home for most circumstances. This has reduced the response time by another 20 to 30 minutes.

Implementation:

- Per Brown County ordinance 4.49 (2), the employees receive stand-by pay at a rate of \$100 per week.

4.49(2) States: *Stand-By Pay. Employees who are assigned stand-by duty may receive compensation for each week assigned to stand-by duty, upon approval of the Department Head. This will be the sole compensation for this stand-by duty, even when such duty would otherwise be out of the employee's usual schedule or classification.*

- ERC employees will need to stay in Brown County (or within a reasonable response time/distance) for the week they are on stand-by.
- ERC employees will not be allowed to have any alcoholic beverages during the week they are on stand-by.

Financial Impact:

- The stand-by pay will cost \$15,600 annually (3 positions x \$100 x 52 weeks).
- Per agreement with the Wisconsin DOT, we bill half of the stand-by pay to the State's RMA and half gets billed to the County's GTA.



ERC Summary:

The goal of the ERC was to improve our overall response time in emergency situations, and we have done that. On average, our response is about 45 minutes to an hour faster than the past call-in procedure. This has improved our overall service to the traveling public and to police/fire personnel that are requesting assistance with traffic control and other emergency situations on state, county, and town roadways (see attached email as an example).

Fontecchio, Paul A.

From: Ann Watzka <awatzka@villageofhoward.com>
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 12:33 PM
To: Fontecchio, Paul A.
Cc: Ed Janke; Steve DeValk
Subject: Thank you to the BC Emergency Response Vehicle

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

We would like to express our appreciation for the support/safety provided to our firefighters by the Brown County Emergency Response Vehicle at a recent incident on I-41.

On June 16th at approximately 12:00, our crews responded to a multi-vehicle accident with extrication needed. Our Battalion Chief expressed that your vehicle on scene helped protect our crews allowing them to provide safe and effective patient care. Our crews often state that the personnel on the BC Emergency Response Vehicles, and all County PW vehicles, are always willing to help us at emergency response scenes. Please know how grateful we are for all of your help.

Take care and stay safe,
Ann

Ann Watzka
(she,her,hers)
Assistant Chief
Howard Fire Rescue
(920) 434-4679