



Ambulance Response Times

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Fast facts

- ▲ In 2007, 94 percent of all lights-and-siren ambulance responses arrived in less than 11 minutes.
- ▲ On average, an ambulance is called in Hennepin every six minutes.
- ▲ The busiest time of day for ambulance responses in Hennepin is during the evening rush hour, between 3 and 6 p.m. The busiest day of the week is Friday, and the busiest month of the year is July.
- ▲ Ambulance services in Hennepin average more than 93,000 responses a year. About three-quarters of those calls are for potentially life threatening emergencies; however, only about 6 percent of those calls are actually life threatening.
- ▲ A 2002-2003 survey of people who used an ambulance in Hennepin found that 98 percent of customers were satisfied, mostly satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.

What are Hennepin's ambulance response times?

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approves ambulance response-time standards every two years. The recommendations are made by Hennepin's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council for two types of situations:

- Life-threatening illnesses or injuries that require an ambulance to respond with lights and siren are called Code 3 situations.
- Non-life-threatening situations that do not require an ambulance to run with lights or siren are called Code 2 situations.

There are five ambulance services licensed to provide emergency Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance response to Hennepin County's 1.1 million residents: Allina Medical Transportation, Edina Fire, Hennepin EMS, North Memorial Ambulance Service and Ridgeview Ambulance. Each service is assigned a primary service area by the state EMS Regulatory Board.

How does the emergency medical service system work?

When a person calls 9-1-1 and indicates a medical emergency, the call taker evaluates the severity of the situation while notifying the ambulance. If the situation is determined to be potentially life threatening, the dispatcher will guide the caller through "pre-arrival instructions" while a designated first responder is notified. Each municipality has a designated first responder, usually fire or police officers who are trained to stabilize people while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

What are the response rates?

Ambulance services in Hennepin made more than 93,000 emergency medical responses in 2007. Approximately 69,000 responses were for potentially life-threatening emergencies. Ninety-four percent of Code 3 responses arrived within 10 minutes, 59 seconds, which exceeds the countywide response standard of 90 percent.

What challenges remain?

Data shows that, although response standards were met for Hennepin as a whole as well as for Minneapolis and larger urban areas, some smaller urban areas and communities continue to pose challenges for emergency response time, in part because they are remote or hard to get to.

To improve services to these hard-to-reach areas, Hennepin's Public Health staff in the EMS Planning and Regulation unit collects data which allows the EMS Council to craft better EMS strategies such as developing mutual aid agreements and testing alternative deployment patterns to decrease response times to these areas.