

Area paramedics train to stay a top of their game

By DAWN LALONDE, Mid-North Monitor
Wednesday, May 29, 2013 11:21:09 EDT PM



Sudbury-Manitoulin Emergency Medical Services' area paramedics gathered this past week for their annual spring training at the Espanola Regional Recreation Complex. Photo by Dawn Lalonde/The Mid-North Monitor/QMI Agency

The Sudbury-Manitoulin Emergency Medical Services' area paramedics gathered this past week for their annual spring training at the Espanola Regional Recreation Complex. Their training was not a sit down day of theory; instead, the best way to ensure their skills are up to date is by holding a mock exercise.

As part of the Ambulance Act it is mandated they must continue training and be evaluated on their patient care skills. This year's training was on how to handle a multiple casualty incident (MCI).

"Along with practice and evaluation of patient care skills, the MCI allows them to practice incident management system (IMS)," explained training superintendent, David Wolff.

As they entered the arena they were told there was a mock explosion of the arena's refrigeration plant. Making it as realistic as possible, one crew arrived on the scene first making them the lead incident command. They got the patients through triage as the other team was responding moments later. They would soon learn one patient was dead, another had a puncture lung, one was unable to respond to their questions as she had been rendered deaf from the explosion, one lost a thumb; one suffered a massive head injury and another had a seizure.

Due to the explosion they were unable to access any outside assistance as during this simulation they learned the fire department was occupied with a fire and police were busy clearing the building. In some real life scenarios they do seek assistance from bystanders and other first responders, especially when dealing with a MCI.

As each group of paramedics arrived on the scene, they were directed to assist an individual. Using their previous skills and training they reassessed the patient and proceeded to prepare them for transport to hospital.

This scenario played out for all 130 of the area EMS paramedics, with each session having three teams of two paramedics on scene. The paramedics outnumbered the casualties.

Once finished clearing the scene of the casualties, they had a debriefing with Wolf and field superintendent Jeff Aiken. They ran through the things they could have improved on and at times reflected on when they faced similar situations when on duty.

This is their reality; they never know what is waiting for them on a scene. The Mid-North Monitor asked why the second group of responders did not run to the scene to assist.

They explained they never run; they approach the scene and take in what is already occurring, they assess the situation. This also brings a calmer approach, as it was pointed out, if the patient saw them running to them, they would assume their injury or situation was more serious and this could alarm the patient. Plus, you do not need the person responding to your medical needs to fall and injure themselves and need assistance.

Some of them noted how the days prior down in Oklahoma, many of the first responders there did not wake up knowing they would be faced with such mass destruction and so many casualties. Also, some reflected on a multi-vehicle collision on Highway 401. This training scenario allowed them to practice something they hope they would never have to face, but in reality it is something they might one day encounter.

“The paramedics were quite happy with the day and I feel they were very professional, and performed very well,” added Wolff.

Meanwhile upstairs in the bar side auditorium there were additional exercises where relief superintendent, Jennifer Belanger assisted the paramedics with other exercises. They took part in dosing and providing a shot of epinephrine intramuscularly, how to properly dress in protective clothing and their compressions for CPR.

They later partook in a brief theory session with their commander of quality assurance, Cindy Dube. She reviewed documentation and electronic patient care reports (ePCRs), methods of documentation, common errors and expectations.
