

## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Tazewell County  
Program Title: Law Enforcement EMT Program (LEEMT)  
Program Category: Criminal Justice - Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Brian Hieatt  
Title: Sheriff  
Department: Tazewell County Sheriff's Office  
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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: C. Eric Young  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: 

# Tazewell County

## Law Enforcement Emergency Medical Technician Program

### **Problem:**

Tazewell County is one of the largest counties in land mass. It is approximately 520 square miles and it contains portions of the Ridge-and-Valley Appalachians and the Cumberland Plateau, and consists of vast mountain regions with small rural communities throughout the county. This makes it difficult for responding to emergency calls, including those that are in need of rescue, and results in longer response times and a possible delay of care during those emergencies.

The population for Tazewell County is approximately 40,000 which limits how many rescue squads are available at any given time. With a county spread out through such a large area, and a limit on how many rescue squads may be available, there are often long wait times on patients needing emergency care. Even though we may have 40,000 residents, that number greatly rises throughout each year because of tourism.

### **Challenge:**

The challenge we faced was to get medical assistance to our citizens quicker, and fill in the time lapse that may be there due to the large coverage area and rescue staffing shortages. We also needed the citizens to feel safe and confident that when they called 911 for a medical emergency that there would be a quick response.

**Solution & Development:**

The solution to this problem came with an innovative proposal from Board of Supervisor Member Charles Stacy, and a collaboration with the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office, the 911 Center, and the Tazewell County Emergency Services. The proposal was to train Deputy Sheriff's as EMTs, certify their police cruisers as Non-Transport Emergency Medical Vehicles, and equip them with the medical equipment needed as an EMS First Responder who can arrive at a scene and render medical aid until a rescue squad can arrive. As an incentive, the Board of Supervisors approved a pay increase for Deputies receiving their certification as an EMT. This program is not intended to take the place of a rescue agency and their staff, but to fill in a gap between the time of the emergency call and their arrival, and they can possible stabilize a life-threatening injury, as well as give a skilled update to the responding EMS.

So we put our idea into reality by doing the following:

1. Enrolling a group of deputies into an EMT Course taught at the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office.
2. Coordinated the program with our County's Director of Public Safety, Barry Brooks, so that the deputies would come under their Medical Director for the County's Rescue Squad.
3. Coordinated with our other local rescue agencies, who worked with our EMT's in training and conducted their required field training.
4. Purchased required medical equipment including, oxygen tanks, equipment for suction and airway management, and splint and triage equipment.
5. Applied for a grant through Carillion Hospital, and received AEDs for all of our Deputy EMTs.
6. Had each police cruiser inspected and certified through the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services, as Non-Transport Emergency Medical Vehicles.
7. Worked with our 911 Center to develop a computer program so that it displays and highlights any deputy on duty that has the EMT Certification, so that they can dispatch them to a medical call if they are in that area of the county.

**Finance & Staffing:**

The Sheriff's Office is very fortunate in that our 911 Director, Captain Randy Ann Davis, is an EMT. She played a large part in organizing and assisting with the training courses, working with VDEM-Office of Emergency Medical Services on the vehicle certifications, and working with Tazewell County's Emergency Services on obtaining and issuing out the equipment. Training is being conducted through the Southwest Virginia Paramedic Program, and our local college, Southwest Virginia Community College, where officers can apply for financial aid which fortunately has been able to pay for most of the classes. The medical bags and equipment that have been issued to the Deputy/EMTs were purchased with ARPA funding, except for the AEDs which were obtained through a grant with Carillion Hospital. We have worked with our local rescue squads so that when we use medical equipment on a call they will replace what we may have used before they arrived. The time the Deputies needed to attend the class and the field training was scheduled through the Sheriff's Office in a way that it did not occur any additional costs than what was already budgeted for salaries. The only reoccurring costs is the pay increase that was given to the Deputies upon getting their certifications. If any of them let their certifications expire or go to a position where they are not able to use their EMT skills, then their pay will be reduced.

**Results:**

Putting the program in place has resulted in several positive outcomes including:

1. Having Deputies working in various areas of the county that are EMT's and can respond to medical emergencies and start medically assisting a citizen before rescue arrives.
2. Having a closer working relationship with our rescue agencies, which help when everyone is on the scene of an emergency.
3. Several of our EMT Deputies have went to work part-time with our local rescue agencies which has helped with their staffing problems.
4. We have been able to reassure our citizens that they have the fastest possible response time for emergencies, by letting them know that we have cross-trained our Deputies for more than just criminal matters.
5. Even though the premise of the program for our Patrol Division, we expanded our program from just the Patrol Deputies to our School Resource Officers and Court House Security Deputies so that if a medical emergency happens in a school our SRO can start providing medical help quickly, and if a medical need arises in our Courthouse our EMT/Deputy there can do the same.
6. During large public events where normally we would need a rescue squad standing by, we have been able to use the EMT/Deputies that were working the event to be available if a medical need arises, which helped keep more rescue squads available in the rest of the county.
7. Deputies that are part of our Special Response Team (SRT) now have EMTs as part of that team, so that they are prepared to render medical aid in the dangerous situations they respond to.
8. We have had multiple incidents where our EMT trained Deputies truly have been able to help our citizens through traumatic medical emergencies, including an elementary student breaking his arm, an elderly woman passing out at a public event, and many more.

**Overview:**

When faced with understaffing and terrain obstacles in responding to medical emergencies, Tazewell County was able to develop and implement an innovative program not seen in Southwest Virginia, that has involved different levels of our county government, multiple municipalities, as well as state agencies. With the development of the new Law Enforcement Emergency Medical Technician Program (LEEMT), Deputy Sheriffs have been able to receive important medical training and become certified EMTs. This new cross training has greatly enhanced our overall ability to respond to medical emergencies. Our Deputy/EMTs have been able to provide quick response to 911 medical calls and start important life-saving care until actual rescue units arrive to take over. This program is not intended to take the place of a full rescue crew, but having Deputy Sheriffs trained and equipped as EMTs allows our 911 Center to send them to a medical emergency, if they are not on a criminal matter, to fill in the response-time gap. It has also helped increase needed staffing to some of our municipal rescue agencies located in Tazewell County, with several of our Deputies joining local rescue agencies on a part-time basis. When we look at all the Patrol Units, School Resource Officers, and Courthouse Deputies that are prepared to render aid as an EMT, we feel that the minimal cost that has been put into this new and exciting program has been greatly outweighed by the many benefits we have seen.



# Deputies receive EMT training to help tackle shortage



By [Robert Castillo](#)

Published: Feb. 16, 2022 at 8:59 PM EST

TAZEWELL COUNTY, Va. (WVVA) - The Law Enforcement EMT Program or LEET will improve access to EMT's in Tazewell County. The program will benefit rural areas bridging the gap of providing life saving measures to those people outside urban areas in the county. The sheriff says having deputies with this dual training is a no brainer.

“Often times we have someone who’s out in those rural areas. So for them to have that medical training, I think is just a win for our citizens.” said Sheriff Brian Hieatt.

Rural areas aren’t the only obstacle first responders face when they roll out on medical calls. The dwindling ranks among EMT’s is an issue coast-to-coast. The Director of Public Safety in Tazewell County weighs-in on the need.

“Our thought process was if we have an ambulance at the hospital tied up and another call comes in. At least we could have somebody with basic knowledge of EMS on scene with a kit until we can get an ambulance there to do the transport.” said Director of Public Safety, Barry Brooks.

The 911 center and sheriff’s department have been working together to maximize the impact of the new cross training. Even going as far as assigning designations in their computer programs to organize which deputies are cross trained as EMT’s and those who aren’t.

“We have actually tagged an EMT star on each of the symbols for each of the deputies that are EMT’s. Making it really convenient, all the dispatcher has to do is look at the CAD. If the EMS units are either tied up and it’s going to be a delay or we’ve got a deputy that’s closer than the EMS unit then we can go ahead and send them on.” said Director of the Tazewell County 911 Center, Randy Ann Davis.

Deputy Andrew Layne is a Sheriff’s Deputy and a school resource officer. He says this cross training helps him become yet another resource to the school.

“It’s an honor that Sheriff Hieatt put his faith in me, that I’d be able to complete the program. It was a very hard program; it was three or four months. Lots of tests lots of practical’s but I’m very glad that I did it and it’s a lot of useful information and I’m thankful that he chose me to do it.” said Layne.

Sheriff Hieatt says he thinks Tazewell County is the only agency in Southwest Virginia with deputies cross trained as EMT’s.

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# Tazewell deputies taking EMT courses to provide emergency care

• By GREG JORDAN Bluefield Daily Telegraph Jul 20, 2021



TAZEWELL, Va. — Rescue squads, fire departments and law enforcement are dispatched when an emergency is reported, but law enforcement is often first on the scene. With this in mind, Tazewell County's deputies are taking a course that will let them be certified as emergency medical technicians, better known as EMTs.

Deputies with the Tazewell County Sheriff's Office started taking the course Saturday. These classes will continue until September.

"We're really excited," Sheriff Brian Hieatt said. "This is our first week of EMT training for our deputies."

Hieatt said the classes came into being after Eastern District Supervisor Charlie Stacy approached him with it.

"We have great EMT services here in Tazewell County, but we thought having deputies trained as EMTs to assist in our overall EMS (emergency medical service) we have here in Tazewell County," Hieatt said.

Some of the class's students are patrol deputies who are often out in different areas of the county. Other students are school resource officers who work in the local school system, Hieatt said. The training will allow deputies and school resource officers to help with medical emergencies.

A deputy who works at the Tazewell County Courthouse is receiving the EMT training as well. The courthouse can have up to 100 people in it at any time, so the training will allow that officer to handle medical emergencies there, Hieatt added.

Deputies can find themselves situations in which somebody has been injured or experiencing a medical emergency such as a heart attack.



“We have great EMS and great response,” Hieatt said. “But if a deputy can start helping someone and assess someone while rescue is on the way, it could help save someone’s life.”

Deputies trained as EMTs will be an asset to the county, said Capt. Randy Ann Davis, 911 Director. “They’re a first responder anyway,” Davis said, adding that the deputies will learn skills such as how to assess a patient, help control bleeding and open an airway. Deputies will be assigned a trauma, or medical bag, to carry with them once their training is complete. Stacy said that participants who successfully complete the classes will be able to sit for the National EMT Certification Exam. The idea behind the courses started coming into being when the Bluefield, Va. Rescue Squad closed.

“Tazewell County about three years ago got into the rescue squad business when the Bluefield, Va. Rescue Squad collapsed,” Stacy recalled. “As a result, we created a new branch of government: Tazewell County EMS, which is our rescue squad service. With that, obviously, we are now involved of a new form of service we were not exactly experienced in providing.” Tazewell County’s size can sometimes make response times longer than providers would like, Stacy said.

“So the concept was we already have our sheriff’s deputies out working and patrolling 24-hours a day. What if we trained some of our deputies to also be EMTs to assist our first responders on these medical emergency calls?” Stacy stated. For example, a deputy who happens to be in Springville when an emergency occurs there could be on scene sooner than EMTs coming from Bluefield, Va., he said.

“The deputy would probably be able to get to the patient faster,” Stacy said. “And if an EMT with basic life support training can get there, then the outcome for the patient is incredibly improved.” Stacy said the county is paying for the pilot program. While providing the county’s residents quicker access to emergency care, training deputies as EMTs will give them a way to work with the community that isn’t adversarial.

The deputies and other participants will benefit as well, Stacy said. The ones who complete the course and earn their EMT certification will give them an increase in their salaries. About six deputies and five school resources officers are in the program now.

“The name of the game is to put the most qualified first responder next to the patients as fast as possible,” Stacy said.

— Contact Greg Jordan at [gjordan@bdtonline.com](mailto:gjordan@bdtonline.com)



Pictures is one of our graduating classes being presented with their EMT Pins and medical equipment during a Board of Supervisors Meetings.

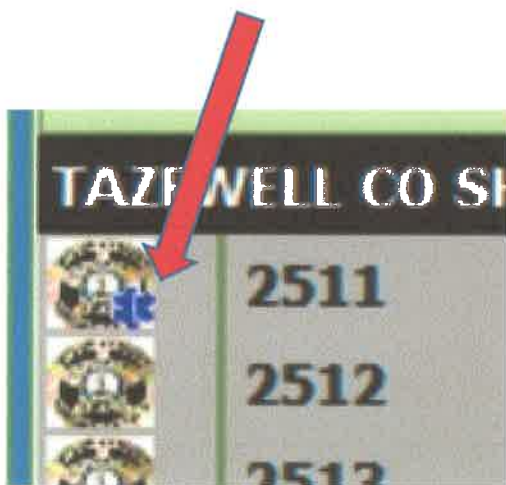


CallType	When	Priority	All Avail	Law	Fire	EMS	Rescue	Other
<b>*Pending CFS (10)</b>								
TAZEWELL	Breaking & Ente...	19:52:55 ...	High					
Y, TAZEWELL	Patrol Log	06:30:01 ...	Low					
IED	Patrol Log	06:30:09 ...	Low					
TAZEWELL	Patrol Log	06:30:12 ...	Low					
AR BLUFF	Patrol Log	06:30:20 ...	Low					
LANDS	Patrol Log	06:30:28 ...	Low					
eral Home Richland...	Funeral Escort	09:40:35 ...	High					
CHLANDS	Reckless Driving	11:14:04 ...	High					
E, NORTH TAZEWELL	911 Hang Up	11:36:57 ...	High					
ET, POUNDING MILL	Civil Disputa	11:50:16 ...	High					
<b>Active CFS (6)</b>								
va	DIRECT TRAFFIC	07:40:21 ...	Low					
chlands   1425 SEC...	Larceny-Theft	10:06:26 ...	High					
EY RD, CEDAR BLUFF	Public Service	10:59:21 ...	High					

Unit	Status	Zone
<b>TAZEWELL CO SHERIFFS OFFICE</b>		
 2511	On Duty	
 2512	On Duty	
 2513	On Duty	
 2515	On Duty	
 2516	On Duty	
 2517	Clear Scene	
 2518	Clear Scene	
 2524	On Duty	
 2526	On Duty	

The Tazewell County 911 Center worked with their Computer Operated Dispatch systems (CAD) to show an emblem designating which Deputies that are currently on-duty are EMT certified, so each 911 Dispatcher will know which officers they can request to respond to medical calls if needed.





Pictures from our EMT Class provided through Southwest Virginia Community College



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Pictures from a team workshop/training between the Tazewell County EMS Crew and our Deputy/EMTs

