



PRESS RELEASE

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AMBULANCE COTS HAVE WEIGHT SCALES INSTALLED

Improved patient care during transport key to investment in new cot technology

MUSCATINE, Iowa – The cots of the Muscatine Fire Department ambulances received an upgrade last week that will improve the care provided to patients as they are transported. Each of the cots had a weight scale installed that will provide an accurate weight for the patient after they have been loaded on to the cot.

“Weights are essential in EMS (Emergency Medical Services),” Gary Ronzheimer, Muscatine Fire Red Shift Battalion Chief and the Training and Operations Supervisor, said. “We administer medications based on a patient’s weight so we are





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eliminating the guess work in administering the correct dosage.”

Before the weight scales, EMS technicians would have to guess the weight and estimate that they have been within 10 percent of the correct weight for approximately 74 percent of the patients but up to 20 percent on other patients.

“When we are inaccurate up to 20 percent of the weight, we run the risk of overdosing or underdosing a patient when giving critical medications,” Ronzheimer said.

The cot scales will give EMS technicians a permissible amount of around three percent accuracy, and that is very good for the patients of all ages, especially the elderly and pediatric patients.

“Muscatine Fire Department is a rural EMS service, so we sometimes have to administer various life-saving medications due to how far our transport time can be to hospitals with specialty care,” Ronzheimer said. “When we have extended transport times, we typically have to give multiple doses or run medications on IV infusion pumps to ensure they get the correct dosage over a certain amount of time to maintain therapeutic levels.”

Muscatine Fire had a demo scale for a couple of months a year ago and realized the benefit this would have to the department. Along with the scales, Muscatine Fire purchased software that syncs to the scale, imports the weight to a medication chart, and does the calculations for the medication based on Muscatine Fire protocols. This new technology will contribute to reducing medication errors, improve accuracy, and reduce the time it takes EMS crews to verify calculations Ronzheimer said.

Cot scales are a new technology and [Hinckley Medical](#) created these scales that will be a huge benefit to patient care across EMS. Mike Elsbernd and Jack Izen spent most of last week in Muscatine to review the software with EMS staff and install the cot scales on all cots in the



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Muscatine ambulance fleet. The purchase of these items was funded through the Muscatine Fire Department capital outlay budget.

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