

First responders help our township and its people. Someone who is a first responder is designated to assist at a scene of an emergency. A person who is a first responder is like someone who defends and protects in basketball. Instead of stopping someone from scoring, they stop natural disasters and criminals and prevent people from death or serious injuries. They help save lives by rescuing, nursing, and launching initiatives or programs to influence others. First responders include police officers, paramedics, firefighters, and EMTs. Police officers patrol and watch for crime, arrest criminals, enforce laws including traffic violations, and respond to emergency calls. Paramedics and EMTs respond to emergency medical calls and perform basic health procedures. Firefighters extinguish fires, promote fire safety, and respond to chemical threats. Just like in basketball, without defenders, everything would be chaos. Driving would be considered a giant hassle because of all the lawbreaking, and criminals would constantly be on the loose. Without medical assistance, many people would die because some complicated medical procedures are challenging to do at home. Without firefighters, then many people's homes would be destroyed. In basketball, defense wins games, and in life, first responders save lives.

One example of first responders doing their job was 9/11. On September 11, 2001, the Middlesex County Prosecutors' Office sent out an urgent request for officers to form a mutual aid force to go to New York. Nine officers stepped up. They first directed to Staten Island Yankees Stadium to set up a collection point for the dead. The WPD volunteers mustered under the Brooklyn Bridge with officers from all over. They were ordered to secure the borders and only allow emergency personnel to pass and were stationed at Church Street, close to where the World Trade Center towers once stood. 9/11 was a tragic day, as nearly 3,000 people died and many were injured. It was essentially a series of airline hijackings and suicide attacks committed by nineteen people associated with the Islamic terrorist group called al-Qaeda. Some attacks hit New York City and Washington D.C. The person behind this was Osama Bin Laden,

who thought America was weak. Some people say that he did this to provoke America into wars, and others say it was because he thought Americans were immoral. Although this happened in New York, Woodbridge contributed to helping the citizens in 9/11.

Another example of first responders showing great bravery is Joseph Lewis trying to catch lawbreakers. On September 18, 1932, police officer Joseph Lewis was killed in the line of duty. As a twelve-year veteran, Lewis worked at an intersection of Avenel street and today's route one. As he was managing Sunday morning church traffic, a group of motorcyclists blew through a red light, nearly striking pedestrians crossing. Lewis started to chase the motorcycles, and while overtaking one, their handlebars touched. This contact forced the two riders to opposite sides of the road. Unfortunately, Lewis collided with a water company truck parked on the side of the road. Lewis didn't die from the crash but died of the injuries several hours later. His efforts will never be forgotten, as he tried to prevent the motorcyclists from doing more damage.

The last example of first responders helping is a terrible train accident in 1951. On February 6, a terrible railroad accident happened approximately at 5 pm. Train number 733 operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad and left Exchange Place in Jersey City. A new bridge was being built, so trains were diverted onto a temporarily constructed wooden bridge. Due to this bridge, speed restrictions were enforced on all trains. The limit went from sixty miles per hour to twenty-five miles per hour to ensure the safety of the trains and the people. Joseph Fitzsimmons was responsible for driving the train, and although constantly reminded of the speed restrictions, he did not slow down the train when coming closer to the wooden bridge. The conductor tried to pull the emergency brakes, but because of the overcrowding of passengers, he failed to do so. The train derailed, and unfortunately, eighty-five people died. Some people were injured, and doctors, nurses, and aides cared for the most critically wounded

and gradually worked down to those who could move. However, fire companies and emergency squads showed outstanding leadership and helped. Even people nearby helped, taking the injured into their homes. The police got involved too, as they faced a traffic problem and many other tasks at that moment. They were able to keep ambulances and rescue vehicles moving. In my opinion, this is the best example of first responders being important because all responders showed great teamwork!

In conclusion, being a first responder isn't easy, just like being a good defender in basketball. Many skills such as leadership and teamwork are required, even though they wouldn't be put in a job description. I care for first responders and saving lives as much as I care for defense and basketball. First responders risk their lives every day, and they also have to leave everything behind if there is an emergency. We can't live without them! In the 1951 train crash, if no one were to help the injured citizens, they could die from wounds and infections. If there were no one to direct traffic, everyone would be scattered all over. When the debris was all over the place near the train, stuck people needed help getting out. Back then and today, the citizens of Woodbridge Township relied on our first responders, so their job is crucial.

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