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A first responder is somebody who is responsible for going to the scene of an accident or emergency to provide assistance to people who need it. The police, firemen, and ambulance & emergency medical services departments are considered first responders. First responders are important to Woodbridge Township because they arrive at an emergency shortly after they happen and give much needed help to the people there. If there were no first responders in Woodbridge Township, emergencies and accidents would be much more fatal because there would be nobody to help if one happened. This essay will explain the history of each of the first responder departments and examples of the events where they have helped the township and its residents.

The Woodbridge Fire Department was started in 1893, when John Tompson proposed to the township committee that a hook and ladder be purchased for the township. Four years later, the Woodbridge Fire Company was a volunteer unit and had a hose cart along with 400 feet of hose and a dozen fire buckets and Charles R. Brown was the first president of the Board for Fire Commissioners from 1897 to 1939. The fire department had two horses, "Tom" and "Harry", supplied by Carpenter's Livery Stable that would gallop to the firehouse on School Street and raced to put out fires. The fire department has a long history of putting out fires and saving the lives of citizens. One example of this was when an oil truck exploded after being struck by a train in 1935.

After the explosion, the township had caught on fire and the firemen and police came and worked calmly under pressure to put out the fires and save lives. An article from Woodbridge Independent states, "Both the police and the firemen, unused to such a crisis, worked with cool hands and the utmost efficiency." This proves that the fire department is important to the township because the firemen were highly effective in putting out the massive fires and saving the lives of the civilians.

The Woodbridge Police Department started in 1895 when Patrick Cullinane became Woodbridge Township's first police officer. In 1911, Woodbridge Township organized a police force after legislation had been passed by the state authorizing higher pay, uniforms, and a system for salaries and promotions. Patrick Murphy was named chief, with Patrick Cullinane, Michael McDonald, Hans Simonsen, and James Walsh being in the force. Before there were police cars, it was difficult to transport offenders to the police station on Main Street. The Woodbridge Police Department has dealt with crimes as well as getting people medical treatment before the emergency medical services existed. One such instance was in August of 1940 when Josephine Johnson and Rebecca McClure fought. One was using a water pitcher and the other held a knife and both had suffered injuries from the fight. Sergeant Patrick De Santis and Officer Michael Bradley arrested both of them and took them to a doctor who gave them the treatment they needed. The police helped in this situation by stopping the violence and taking them to a doctor to get treated after arresting them.

The Woodbridge Medical Emergency Service was started in 1937, when a group of young men decided that a local emergency service was needed to aid the community and by August of 1937, the Woodbridge Emergency Squad had registered with the police to allow only the closest squads to respond to an emergency. With the help of public donations, the first ambulance was purchased to transport people to hospitals and was kept at the firehouse. The Woodbridge Fire Squad was led by Elbur Richards and consisted of volunteers. The Woodbridge EMS has helped thousands of people by swiftly taking them to hospitals. An example of this was when Frank Bloodgood fell down a stairway in 1923. Frank fractured his skull when he fell down and was transported to a hospital by an ambulance and died at the hospital. An article from the Avenel Bulletin says, "Mrs. Chester Haight with other women, were gathered. Mrs. Haight, being a trained nurse, rushed right over, administering what help she could, until the ambulance from Rahway came and got the injured man." This proves that the EMS helps the residents of the township because they used an ambulance to quickly take Frank to a hospital after he was injured.

To conclude, first responders are people who go to an accident to provide help. The fire, police, and emergency medical service departments are considered first responders. They are extremely important to Woodbridge Township because they quickly arrive at an emergency to save lives and prevent violence. Instances in which they have helped the residents of the township are when the fire department put out

fires from an oil truck exploding, the police department taking two injured people to the doctor, and when the emergency medical services took a man who fell down a flight of stairs to a hospital. The departments that make up first responders have served the township for over 100 years and worked so hard to make sure that people in the township are safe when an emergency happens. The courageous people who work as first responders deserve praise and credit for their work.

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