

First Responders

What is a first responder? A first responder is the first person you think to call in an emergency. As it says in their name “first responders”, they are the first people to respond and show up to an accident. They are the very first people to help at the scene of an emergency. A first responder is someone who is trained to respond to anyone who has a crisis. Who is a first responder? When you hear the words “first responders” you think of the police, firefighters, or emergency medical technicians (also known as EMTs). There are many people who are first responders. There are people who volunteer and then there are professionals. Volunteers work for free and they have other jobs. They also give up their time to help others. While professionals get paid because it is their occupation. All first responders are heroes. They are brave, courageous, fearless, daring, and valiant. First responders risk their lives to save others. There have been many responders that have passed away while trying to save others. First responders are hard working people. They make us feel safe in dangerous situations. They are always willing to help others.

Why are first responders important in a community? There have been numerous situations where many people or maybe just one person was in a dangerous situation and first responders came to help. First responders ensure our safety. We know that there is always someone to help. However first responders are always in great danger too, but they will still help us. Some examples of why firefighters would help us are to put out a fire or if we smell gas. Police will help us if we are in danger, if there is a robber, or if someone has a weapon. An EMT can help if you're hurt, in pain, or in a bad accident. First responders can also help with a pet like if your pet is missing or stuck somewhere. There are also many other situations they can help us in. First responders work together sometimes. As an example if you get into a really bad car accident there might be police to investigate the scene, there might be EMTs to help hurt

people, and there might be firefighters if the car is on fire. In situations like these first responders will help each other. They will work together, even though they all perform different tasks. First responders keep our community safe and they allow us to feel secure.

There have been many examples where first responders have helped us in Woodbridge Township. One example is October 21st, 1941. On this day numerous first responders were needed. A train wreck caused multiple injuries and deaths. This accident had many first responders from different towns such as Woodbridge, Westfield, Plainfield, Rahway, and more. On the scene of the train wreck the police and emergency squad responded. They helped save any injured people. According to the October 24, 1941, *Fords Beacon*, engineer Edwards Adams was driving the train. "According to Gedicts was made at a closed hearing yesterday at which Adams is alleged to have testified that he had passed a stop signal set against him". (*Fords Beacon*, October 24, 1941) Prosecutor John A. Lynch stated that his team had made no investigation. The prosecutor would soon launch a thorough investigation with Police Chief George E. Keating, Captain John Egan, and Detective Sergeant George Ballint. Officials believed the crash was in Rahway because the police of the city were the first to respond. Then a call was sent to Woodbridge for aid. When Woodbridge police showed up to the scene they were then stationed by Chief George E. Keating. The Chief made sure the injured were transported to the hospital, he made sure that the traffic was diverted, and the curious seekers were kept off the tracks at the scene.

Another tragedy in Woodbridge on a train track was October 11, 1938. On a Tuesday afternoon in Colonia a man was killed on the tracks. Benjamin Medgebow was instantly killed after being struck by a Pennsylvania railroad train. The people in control of the train were Conductor I.W. Nichols, Engineer Leon Bedman, and Fireman Basil Wassell. When the police arrived at the scene they immediately started investigating. Sergeant George Ballint, Sergeant Ben Parsons, and Patrolman Joseph Casale found a bottle of liniment marked poison. According to the October 14, 1938 *Fords Beacon*, the bottle was found alongside the badly

battered body. The investigators state "Medgebow's car was discovered by Officer Casale and the motor of the car was still hot as if the driver had just left the vehicle." (*Fords Beacon*, October 14, 1938) Woodbridge had given Medgebow's body to Coroner Mullen of Perth Amboy. As stated in the newspaper article the Prosecutors could not reach the Fireman or Engineer involved in the situation to explain the reason for the accident.

An additional story where someone needed a first responder was the night of July 23, 1958. According to the July 24, 1958 *Fords Beacon*, in the morning police were questioning a blood-stained suspect. The newspaper article states that the suspect was part of "The brutal beating of a Laurence Harbor man in a wooded section of Iselin." (*Fords Beacon*, July 24, 1958) The brutally beaten man, identified as Albert Embley, was in the Perth Amboy General Hospital in critical condition. The Detective Joseph Gyenes said Embley's story "doesn't quite fit." Embley asserts the men beat him up, took his wallet, wrist watch, ring, car keys, and they disrobed him. Embley also states that the men stripped the tires of his car and left it on it's jacks. After the suspects left Embley made his way to the home of Sam Doktor. Embley was given clothes and aid.

First responders have been crucial to our township in the past, in the present, and will continue in the future. Police, firefighters, EMT's, and volunteer first responders have shown their bravery and their hard work. All first responders deserve our respect and admiration. First responders are very important for the safety of our community. First responders allow us to feel safe in Woodbridge Township.