

2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION
Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Emergency Medical Services

REQUEST NO.: 3

REQUESTED BY: Houston

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REQUEST: How many motorcycles does Emergency Medical Services Department (EMS) use for medical services and what services are provided? Do any other cities use motorcycles for medical services?

RESPONSE: Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS) currently have a total of six motorcycles within the existing ATCEMS Motorcycle Medic Program. The primary use of the Motorcycle Medic Program has been within special events. The motorcycles are utilized at about 40 dedicated special events per year.

The motorcycle medic program is designed to allow for EMS to be more agile and expeditious in responses during events or circumstances in which a traditional ambulance may be delayed, which has proven to be a valuable resource for the department. Examples include events in which heavy vehicular or pedestrian traffic creates significant congestion and delays in immediate or surrounding areas (i.e. SXSW, Formula One, other similar large scale events). The Motorcycle Medic Program is staffed by Advance Life Support (ALS) Medics who are able to provide the same initial patient care and assessment as one would expect by the same medics arriving by ambulance.

The use of motorcycles within the emergency medical services field are predominantly in countries outside of the United States. Motorcycle Medics are used within the EMS systems in London, Japan, Brazil, Hong Kong, Australia, Portugal and Germany to name a few. These areas have found significant value in supplementing ambulance responses in areas of heavy congestion and high demand for EMS. Results in these locations have been positive in that a motorcycle has faster response times than ambulance and is able to cancel the ambulance for defined incidents in which transports are not required or needed. Within the United States, other than Austin-Travis County EMS, only Miami-Dade Fire Department in Florida and Daytona Beach Fire Rescue have a motorcycle medic program.

It is the Department's intent to expand the use of the motorcycle medic program to supplement EMS responses within the daily 9-1-1 operations. The specifics of this "beta test" are still being defined but we anticipate similar results found by those EMS programs that utilize a motorcycle response program.