

FACT SHEET
Denver Health
Paramedic Fleet

May 2008

Denver Health knows how important it is to keep its fleet of ambulances ready to respond to any medical emergency, even under extraordinary conditions.

For 2006 and 2007, the Denver Health Paramedic Division reported to the University Health System Consortium two incidents related to mechanical failures of ambulances while transporting patients. Neither incident resulted in a compromise of patient care. During this two years, Denver Health Paramedic Division ambulances responded to 156,646 calls for emergency medical assistance, and completed 100,385 patient transports to local hospitals.

Denver Health currently has 31 ambulances in its fleet with six new ambulances on order to be delivered in May 2008.

In 2007, the ambulance fleet mileage totaled 832,249. The average mileage per ambulance per year is 29,205. As ambulances approach 200,000 miles, the fleet manager conducts a cost/benefit analysis, including an evaluation of the vehicle's overall service history. All ambulances are Ford E350 diesel engine, cab and chassis with Life Line aftermarket customs modules.

Routine service is performed on the ambulances every 3,000 miles, and includes lubrication, oil and filter changes. Tire tread wear is checked every 3,000 miles, and tires are replaced if damaged and/or when tread depth is 5/32 of an inch or less. Brake pads and rotors are inspected every 3,000 miles, and pads are replaced at a thickness of 6/32 of an inch or less.

The City and County of Denver conducts annual inspections of all ambulances in the Denver Health Paramedic Division fleet. These inspections include mechanic certification for the condition of wheels, tires, steering, alignment, brakes, lights, electrical system, glass, exhaust system, fuel system and sheet metal.

After every shift, a check is conducted by a crew of vehicle service technicians on staff at Denver Health. Vehicle service technicians clean and re-stock ambulances, and perform a safety check before the vehicle is assigned to its next shift. In addition, Paramedics assigned to drive the ambulance perform a series of safety checks prior to the start of each shift.

Vehicle service technicians and Paramedics are required to place a vehicle out of service for any one of several items (see below), or any safety concern they may have. If a problem with an ambulance is discovered during one of these inspections, or is reported

by a driver, the ambulance is immediately taken out of service and a repair order is generated and sent with the ambulance to the repair facility.

Ambulances are taken out of service if there is any indication that there may be an issue with any of the following:

- Brake lights;
- Tail lights;
- Turn signals;
- Headlights;
- Sirens;
- Two or more emergency lights not working anywhere on the vehicle;
- Tires with sidewall cuts or torn flaps;
- Seats, seat belt(s) not functioning properly;
- Air bag indicators not functioning properly;
- Any fluid or oil leaking from the vehicle;
- Any unusual engine or drive train noise; and/or
- Windshield cracks or chips impeding driver's vision.

By contract, the company that services the ambulances must respond to requests for vehicle service within one hour of notification. In most cases, when an ambulance is taken out of service for repair or general maintenance, it is returned by the repair shop to the Paramedic garage within 24 hours.