



NEWSLETTER

SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1937

2022 Year in Review and 2023 Outlook

Call Volume Jumped 16% Amid Notable Accomplishments in Operations, Personnel, and Governance

The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad (BCCRS) saw demand for its emergency services increase sharply in 2022. At the same time, BCCRS continued its focus on operational and service excellence, investing time and financial resources on new equipment, basic and advanced training, and the promotion of its next generation of EMS and fire/rescue leaders.

2022 Year-in-Review Highlights

- **Call volume up 16%** to > 8,000 – an average of more than 22 calls/day
- **Full-year operation** of new ambulance service in Chevy Chase
- **10,730 hours** of formal EMS, fire, and rescue training
- Procurement of **three new emergency vehicles**

This year, the priorities for the Squad's Board of Directors, command staff and operational personnel include continued investment in state-of-the-art vehicles and equipment, reviewing options to build a new station, and expanding volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives. ■

Increased Demand for BCCRS Services in 2022

BCCRS responded to 8,113 calls in 2022 – an average of more than 22 responses per day and a 16% increase over 2021. As with fire/rescue departments throughout the country, more than 80% of the Rescue Squad's calls in 2022 were for emergency medical calls, while 141 incidents involved a report of a fire in a home, high-rise or other building.

Among the common type of calls to which BCCRS units responded:

- Motor vehicle collisions (930) – 84 of which involved reports of persons trapped or seriously injured
- Unconscious or decreased level of consciousness (741)
- Cardiac and stroke emergencies (568)
- House or structure fires (141)
- Pedestrians or cyclists struck by a vehicle (58)

While most of these calls were in Bethesda and Chevy Chase, the Squad responded to hundreds of emergencies in neighboring areas, including **North Bethesda/Rockville** (494), **Cabin John** (299), **Potomac** (181), and **Glen Echo** (139). ■

Full-Year Operation of New Ambulance 707 in Chevy Chase



Last year was the first full year of service for Ambulance 707, a new, state-of-the-art ambulance operating from the Chevy Chase Fire Department at 8001 Connecticut Avenue. The unit, which operated under a pilot program in 2021, is in service from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm, seven days a week. In 2022, the unit ran approximately 1,500 calls. It is staffed by at least two EMTs and equipped with both basic and advanced life support equipment, allowing the ambulance to be upgraded when a paramedic is available. ■



TRAINING FOR Operational Excellence

BCCRS prides itself on the knowledge, experience, and dedication of its personnel, and nowhere is this better reflected than in the Squad's commitment to training and personnel development. Last year, more than 100 BCCRS members completed **10,730 hours** of formal training (both classroom and virtual), most of which occurred at the County's public safety training academy. These hours do not include thousands of hours of on-site training virtually every night of the week. The training covered all aspects of our operations, including:



Basic EMS skills
(4,650 hours)



**Paramedic/
advanced life
support**
(2,250 hours)



**Firefighter/
rescuer training**
(2,000 hours)



**Emergency
vehicle driver
training**
(680 hours)



**Officer/
management
training**
(750 hours)

BCCRS also hosted the annual Rescue Weekend, which brought together fire/rescue personnel from more than 10 departments across Maryland to practice advanced heavy and technical rescue skills. Fifty (50) students and 15 instructors focused on hands-on skills involving heavy lifting and Metro car operations, rope rescue, man vs. machine scenarios, vehicle extrication, and advanced stabilization. ■

Personnel Development and Leadership



The recruitment, training and promotion of EMS and fire/rescue personnel and leaders are keys to the Squad's focus on operational excellence long-term success. In 2022, numerous members were promoted to operational and leadership roles (all of whom meet the same training and experience qualifications as their career counterparts; several [e.g., heavy rescue squad drivers] must meet internal requirements above and beyond the County minimums).

- Four (4) were promoted to Fire/Rescue Officer and one (1) to EMS Officer
- Four (4) were qualified to become heavy rescue squad drivers
- Eight (8) were qualified as emergency ambulance drivers
- Six (6) were promoted to charge EMT status
- One (1) was certified as a national registry paramedic (NREMT-P)



Emergency Vehicles and Life-Saving Technology

BCCRS has a well-earned reputation for early adoption of the most promising life-saving technologies, including the first paramedic unit in Maryland and one of the first departments in the U.S. to deploy a thermal imaging camera for firefighters. In 2022, BCCRS made significant investments in both new vehicles and equipment, including:

- Ordering a new incident command platform with expected delivery in the first quarter of 2023. This addition to the BCCRS fleet will allow chief officers to better manage complex incidents in coordination with Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service.
- Purchasing a new, \$380,000 state-of-the-art ambulance for delivery in mid 2023.
- Ordering a new paramedic "chase car" at a cost of approximately \$90,000.
- Procuring an entire new cache to replace existing and aging power tools to help on car accidents and other rescue incidents. ■

Board Governance and Other Initiatives

Effective and transparent not-for-profit governance has been a hallmark of BCCRS for many years. The Squad remains a **Four-Star Charity with Charity Navigator** (with a rating of a 91%).

In 2022, BCCRS received a "clean" audit from its independent outside auditors with no findings of deficiencies or concerns for management.

To encourage members to maintain personal health and fitness, the board of directors and an internal recreation fund paid for by the membership funded a substantial upgrade to the Squad's gym and fitness center, adding additional weight and cardiovascular machines, free weights, and other exercise equipment. The renovated gym should be completed in 2023.

Also in 2022, the board of directors retained a real estate broker to advise on future real estate options and opportunities to best position BCCRS for the next 50 years. The Squad's current building is more than 50 years old and lacks key infrastructure and facilities for a modern fire/rescue department, including inadequate facilities for female personnel; poor living and bunkroom facilities; and a lack of modern ventilation systems that promote personnel health and safety. ■



Health Care Heroes Award

The Daily Record, a statewide business and legal newspaper, selected BCCRS to receive one of the Record's annual "Health Care Heroes" award. The award recognizes organizations that have made an impact on the quality of health care within the state. The winners were selected by an outside panel of health care leaders. Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, senior group publisher of The Daily Record said, "The 2022 Health Care Heroes lead, innovate, serve their communities, and mentor no matter what challenges they face. Their extraordinary efforts, particularly over the past two years, are nothing less than remarkable. ■

LOOKING FORWARD: Plans for 2023 and Beyond



This year, the Rescue Squad plans to use short- and long-term investments in the Squad's operational activities and governance. Three new emergency vehicles will be placed in service. The Board will soon consider important new initiatives to bolster volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition. A new cache of electric tools will be added to the heavy rescue squad's inventory of life-saving equipment. Funding is being sought for a new battery powered Lucas CPR device. And the Squad plans to add members of the public (who are not BCCRS volunteers) to its Board of Directors. ■

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, Inc. FIRE, RESCUE & EMS

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WHAT MAKES BCCRS

UNIQUE?

BCCRS is unique in that it is the **only** local fire/rescue department in Montgomery County to be managed entirely and staffed primarily by volunteer personnel. That means BCCRS provides the majority of its staffing with volunteer paramedics, firefighters, and EMTs – the equivalent of more than 50 full-time career positions. BCCRS also staffs more front-line fire/rescue/EMS positions than any other local department in the County.

Regarding service in its immediate response area, BCCRS is the **only department in the Bethesda and Chevy Chase areas to operate 24/7 ambulance service**. And by staffing multiple EMS units, BCCRS was able to supplement County-provided service in neighboring areas, responding hundreds of calls in **North Bethesda/Rockville (494)**, **Cabin John (299)**, **Potomac (181)**, and **Glen Echo (139)**.

Finally, BCCRS is the only local department to fund most of its operational expenses through donations from individuals and foundations. That is why continued community support, particularly financial contributions from individuals, is so critical to BCCRS' continued operation and success. To learn more, visit the Squad's website at www.bccrs.org. To donate, please go to <https://donate.bccrs.org>.