

REVISED EMS TRANSPORTATION POLICY

August 25, 2009

Issue:

The City of Coral Gables Fire Department currently charges non-residents for Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical transportation, and does not bill City residents for the same service.

As with most services, the Fire Department has experienced substantial increases in its cost of operations. The operating expenses for providing BLS and ALS transportation services are constantly rising due to increasing salaries, rising fuel costs, and increasing costs of both medical supplies and vehicle maintenance. As a result, the gap between the outlay of offering transportation services and cost of recovery is widening. The purpose of this Ordinance is to offset the rising expenses of providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transportation by bringing current transportation policies for both non-residents and residents into alignment with current industry practices in Miami-Dade County.

Analysis:

The increasing costs of providing EMS transportation is not unique to the City of Coral Gables. Throughout the region, other cities are faced with the same issue. As such, these cities are trying to balance the cost of providing quality service with establishing a reasonable fee for service.

The City of Coral Gables is the only municipality that does not charge its residents for EMS transportation. Transportation of residents accounted for sixty-three percent (63%) of all the calls for service during a one year period from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

Public Awareness:

If acceptable to the Commission, to inform residents about this new fee, the City will disseminate information using all City media outlets. In addition, the City will issue press releases to inform the media about the implementation of this new program and the Fire Chief will present the information in public forums and community meetings.

Recommendation:

It is recommended the City Commission adopt the proposed Ordinance changes. This recommendation is consistent with what the other municipalities in Miami-Dade County are currently implementing to sustain quality emergency medical services.