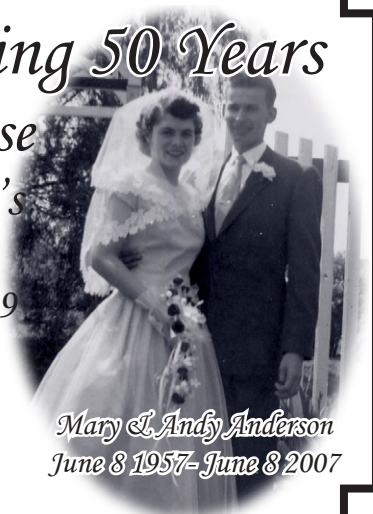


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# Great response for Acton Ambulance

**By Frances Niblock**

Eight minutes, 25 seconds. Nine times out of 10.

Those numbers could be as vital to your health as your heart rate and pulse in a medical emergency because they indicate how fast an ambulance may get to your door.

Last year, nine times out of 10, Halton Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics got to Acton calls within that 8:25 timeframe, besting the Halton-wide rural/urban

average of just under 10 minutes.

"We're well under the standard for the Acton area," said Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Director Jim King recently.

"We like to have good numbers," he said.

In 2005, calls for the Acton station were answered, on average, in nine minutes and 21 seconds.

One of the first things King did when he came to Halton in 1999 was to extend full EMS coverage to Acton. The station

on Churchill Road covers 300-square-kilometres of territory, including some of neighbouring Wellington County.

The Acton station responded to 2,626 calls last year, up six per cent over the year before. The top three reasons for calls were respiratory problems, cardiac problems and motor vehicle collisions.

Halton has 150 full and part-time EMS workers. King said approximately half of all full-time paramedics have advanced training that allows them to carry controlled medications and perform more procedures, including intubation.

"We try to make sure that we keep at least one advance care paramedic on duty in each community, but

it depends on the makeup of the crews that are on that day," King said, adding supervisors and first response units are also available to respond to calls.

King said while they have run into trouble with off-loading – EMS workers having to wait with patients at a hospital, sometimes for hours, while hospital officials try to admit the patient – it is not yet a significant issue in Georgetown.

"It impacts our ability to respond, so we try to negotiate a bed as fast as we can," King said, adding off-loading will also be an issue in fast-growing Milton.

Last year, Halton EMS team responded to 50,000-plus calls from 11 stations. The annual operating budget of the Acton station is \$1.1-million.

## Risk Watch hosts safety blitz Saturday

Hot dogs, cold drinks, interactive computer games and a bike rodeo are all part of the line-up for the annual Risk Watch Summer Safety Blitz at the Churchill Road Fire Station in Acton on Saturday.

Organizers say the blitz, set to run from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., promises a lot of fun for people of all ages.

But it's also a chance to help children and their parents understand how to prevent injuries and make safe, smart choices, said Harry Olivieri, the town's chief of fire prevention and

public education.

"The Risk Watch Blitz will host activities including a bike helmet inspection clinic, bike rodeo, water safety, fire and burn prevention, poisoning and choking prevention, falls prevention and school bus safety."

The program was developed by the National Fire Protection Association and endorsed by the Fire Marshal's Public Safety Council, said town fire safety specialist David Ford.

This year's program will also look at farm equipment safety, ATV's and boating. There will also be a "Home Alone Program," where, by appointment, parents and children 10-14 can take part in a classroom session looking at when kids are old enough to be left alone.

Halton Regional Police, Halton EMS and Representatives from O.P.P. will also be on hand.

To register or for more information, call 905-877-2238 ext. 8422.



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