



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Michael Maclsaac, Chief of EMS
Date:	February 24, 2016
Re:	EMS Rebranding – Issue Report

Recommendation

That the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board Program Planning Committee accept this report as a plan to update the striping design of the current Ambulances with the intent of creating a safer workplace for the Paramedics. Additionally, with the change in striping also comes an opportunity to rebrand with a new name and new cresting to reflect the most recent trend of this evolving industry.

Background

Ambulance Striping

In August of 2010 the Ministry of Labour Emergency Medical Services Section 21 Sub Committee began releasing Guidance Notes which are intended to assist Emergency Medical Services (EMS) employers, workers and joint health and safety committees by explaining the minimum requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. The guidance notes are intended to assist the workforce in ensuring a healthy and safe workplace. Ministry of Labour inspectors may refer to these guidance notes and additional information such as alerts, standards, guidelines, etc. when they carry out enforcement duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

Released in September 2015, Emergency Medical Services Guidance Note #5 Traffic Safety & Worker Visibility recommends the following in relation to vehicle conspicuity:

To enhance EMS vehicle visibility and to provide additional safety measures in low lighting/poor visibility conditions, it is recommended that employers use vehicle visibility packages that include lighting and/or retro-reflective striping to outline the vehicle, including the interior of patient compartment doors. This will assist oncoming traffic (i.e. drivers) in identifying emergency vehicles from a distance to ensure that a safe distance from emergency scenes is maintained.

Canadian studies for best practices in vehicle visibility are minimal. On this basis, American and European base studies have been used to assist in development such as the [FA/323 August 2009 Federal Emergency Management Agency Study](#), [National Fire Protection Association Draft Standard for Automotive Ambulances](#) as well as a review of European standards. Transport Canada Guidelines and the Occupational Health and Safety Act General Construction Regulations 76-69.1 Traffic Control have also been reviewed when looking to vehicle safety. Many of the studies point to using high-visibility material in addition to emergency lighting, to increase visual recognition. Recommendations point to the use of high visibility green and blue chevron patterns on rear of vehicles, reflective white outlines on sides of vehicle and use of large block lettering.

Reflexite V98 high visibility green draws attention and it is not naturally occurring. It reflects 98% of lumens and is visible in all lighting conditions. High visibility green is the most visible colour to the human eye, including those who are visually impaired and is more visible at night. Because of this, the recommendation will be to change from the historic orange and blue striping on the ambulances to green and blue.

Current example of the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB ambulance at night.



Example of High Visibility Ambulance (Norfolk County) at night.



The difference above is quite noticeable. On the high visibility ambulance, a reflective white stripe outlines the cab and body showing the size and shape of the vehicle. The high visibility green at the top of the box outlines the vehicle and adds to side visibility, especially during traffic movement. Large block lettering allows the vehicle to be easily identified. As per requirement of the Ambulance Act, the lettering is also highly contrasted.

Rebranding

Additionally, Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB is seeking to re-brand its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB Paramedic Services. Utilizing Paramedic Services in the naming convention will provide a more accurate reflection of the nature of the services provided in both the immediate and future environments.

The name Paramedic Services is much more recognizable by the general public and is not confused with “medical services” provided by physicians, nurses, and other public medical entities. While we have been using EMS for approximately the last 15 years, there is still some confusion as to what EMS stands for.

Although Paramedics will continue to provide emergency medical care, the profession is undergoing an evolution into more than just providing public emergency medical care. Services such as the Community Paramedicine program, Public Access Defibrillation program, and Public Education are all examples of programs provided by Paramedics throughout the province that are not strictly emergency care related.

There is a trend afoot to change naming across the industry. The annual celebration of “EMS Week” held in May across Canada was renamed to “Paramedic Services Week” by the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada in 2014 and subsequently by the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC) in 2015. The OAPC itself recently rebranded in 2012, formerly being known as the Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario (AMEMSO).

Conceptual Drawings

Based upon the above, late last year we engaged a local graphic designer who had previously performed some work for the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA). The task was to generate a new vehicle design that took into account the high visibility recommendations with a secondary focus on local significance. We also asked that a new cresting be designed for use on both the Ambulances and Paramedic uniforms. The main focus on this project was to provide a cresting and shoulder flash that would represent the area that the DSB covers.

We have had a number of conceptual drawings developed meant to detail possibilities for a personalized high visibility ambulance. The following drawings detail some of the concepts under evaluation. Please note that it is the staff’s intention to finalize a variety of striping options, including some possibly not displayed below, to present to employees as options moving forward. Once a final option is chosen, the concept is sent to the ambulance manufacturer for engineered drawings (included as part of the

total vehicle costing) to be developed taking into account any unique characteristics of the vehicle. The intention is for the new striping to be effective on the 2016 ambulances.



Both drawings, while generating the high visibility safety aspect of what we were looking for also offer some local considerations. In the top drawing the wavy line is meant to signify the abundance of water in the area, while the bottom drawing also pulls in a stylized tree branch signifying the forestation within the area.

When it comes to the cresting and shoulder flash design, there is much more ability to draw upon local intricacies. The following designs are under consideration with some minor changes anticipated in the final rendition.



The cresting within the badge takes its shape and form from the Canadian Paramedic rank & insignia which is currently used on the Paramedic uniform on the shoulder epaulettes. The particular features of this design are as follows:

- Emphasis is placed on the wording of PARAMEDIC as well as MANITOUIN-SUDBURY DSB.
- The Rod of Asclepius (rod and snake) in the centre takes its name from the god Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicinal arts in Greek mythology. This symbol continues to be used today as a symbol of healthcare and is most prominently displayed in the American Star of Life symbol of Ambulance services.
- The red maple leaf symbolizes the country while the white trillium represents the province
- The golden wreath of 19 maple leaves represents the 18 member municipalities and the Unorganized Territory (TWOMO)
- Lastly, the medicine wheel is prominently displayed within the wreath representing First Nations. This also ties in organizationally as a medicine wheel surrounds 4 people holding hands as part the DSB logo.

What DSSAB Neighbours are Doing

Many other services in Ontario are switching to high visibility striping including Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services, Algoma Paramedic Services, Grey County Paramedic Services, and Muskoka EMS to name only a few.

EMS across the province are also gradually shifting to the new naming convention. When surveyed recently of the fifty-four (54) services in Ontario, twenty-eight (28) have already switched to Paramedic Services. Of the remaining services, twenty (20) are indicating their desire to change within the next twelve (12) months. With this it is expected that 91% of the province will be rebranded by the end of this year. Two neighbours, Greater Sudbury and Algoma, have already made this change.

Budgetary Implications & Planned Implementation

Vehicle decaling will be changed over as the vehicles are replaced by the normal replacement cycle. Current vehicle striping costs are from \$2,085 to \$2,225. The cost for the new striping is estimated to range from \$4,000-\$6,045 depending on the striping option chosen. This new pricing is in line with what other services are paying for similar striping designs. It has to be noted that these costs are per ambulance and that they are amortized as part of the overall vehicle cost over the course of the 7-year life of the vehicle (**\$571**-\$864 per year).

New uniform shoulder crests are purchased annually and the costs already included in annual budgets. The price difference between the current cresting and the new option is 0.28 cents more. This cost can be absorbed into the current operating budget.

There would be no cost in terms of administrative budget as in today's age any document containing EMS identifiers are printed on company printers. Internal templates would be altered to reflect the change. Lastly, from an identification

perspective, it would be recommended that alterations to the station signage be budgeted for in the 2017 budget.

Generally speaking, in order to minimize costs, efforts will be made to ensure that the re-branding will be on go forward purchases only. The only area where it would be opportunistic to alter previously made purchase would be for newer jackets, as jackets are only purchased every 3 years at a minimum. This cost would be well under \$1,000 and may actually assist in lowering the cost on a bulk purchase of shoulder badges. The rest of uniform re-branding will commence with uniforms purchased in 2016.

Conclusion

The opportunity to create a safer workplace is one opportunity that must be explored. The Paramedic industry change in Ontario to alter striping designs on ambulances to those that provide for greater visibility is really taking off. More and more services throughout the province are making the change with Algoma most recently making this change last year.

From a branding perspective, an organizations brand is essential in delivering its mission, values and message. The design of a logo and associated colours help to drive a product. When that product is healthcare proper branding is something that should not be overlooked. Developing a safer ambulance striping package, with new colours increasing visibility, creates in tandem the perfect chance to rebrand Emergency Medical Service to Paramedic Services. This change reflects the ever-changing role that the Paramedic plays in healthcare and helps to align services with the majority of the province. Making both these changes at the same time allows for a wholesale change in public perception of the valued service that Paramedics provide.