



UnityPoint Health
St. Luke's Hospital

LifeGuard
Air Ambulance



October 2013

Volume 9, Number 4



Contact LifeGuard
through your local
dispatch
or by calling
(800)223-6627

NEWSFLASH:

Preferred frequencies
to use when speaking
with LifeGuard are:

- 155.340 VMED 28
(State EMS)
- 155.475 VLAW 31
(Law Mutual Aid)

Remember to
identify who
LifeGuard will be
speaking with

LifeGuard Air
Ambulance
1026 A Ave N.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA
52406-3026

VIEW FROM THE COT

Sue Mincks, LifeGuard Paramedic is the author of the following article.

Recently I had the opportunity to experience what our patients experience. Yes, I was on the other side of care. And I discovered how many things we do right! I often have wondered if what we did, the care we gave, the conversations we held helped in any way. And now I know.

My husband and I were involved in a head-on collision with another vehicle at the end of May. We saw it coming and had time to prepare. My husband attempted every evasive and defensive driving technique he knew. I placed my feet on the floor, sat up straight in the seat and said a few things that cannot be repeated as I looked straight at the grill of the other car. I began to press my imaginary brakes to the floor...to the road...and it didn't help. I pressed harder. Boom! Airbags deployed. Front end smashed and pushed up and in. Seatbelts held. My floor remained, but alas, the bones in the ankle did not. Other drivers on the roadway saw the collision and 911 was called immediately. My husband and I managed to get out of the car by ourselves. The smell and smoke from the airbags was strong and causing us to cough almost uncontrollably. By this time we heard the sirens of the local ambulance service.

As I was standing against the guard rail, one of the crew members arrived at my side. It was raining and cold. He informed me of who he was (I regret I can't remember his name) and what ambulance service he was with. He then began asking what happened, how fast, where was I hurt, had I lost consciousness, and where I had been in the vehicle. At the same time, he was instructing his partners to make sure my husband was okay, what equipment was needed, etc. He also told me exactly what they were going to do. Being me, I suggested a different way. And my husband suggested that they do what they thought was right. The crew leader informed me of every move they were making. I don't know about anyone else, but when being placed on the longboard, I chose to keep my eyes closed. He told me why they were doing everything.

Once in the ambulance, my splinted leg was placed on a pillow. And you know what? Everything we have been taught is correct!! A splint relieves an amazing amount of discomfort. Elevation relieves even more discomfort. A voice talking to you, continuously asking if there is any pain, also helps. Their conversation about the weather and events of the area was nice in that it distracted me a bit from how upset and angry I was at the whole situation. My vitals were checked several times. The heat was turned on and again I was asked if that helped. There was constant reassurance that my husband was in the other ambulance, and that my shoe had been retrieved (I love my shoes!)

My experience was minor compared to many of those that we all have transported in the past. But I find that talking to our patients, letting them know what we are doing, where we are geographically, how much longer it will be, telling them why we are doing something and then asking if any change, really does help the patient feel better. So keep doing what you have been taught. It works.



Requesting LifeGuard:

Remember if you are unsure whether you'll need LifeGuard, you may tell dispatch that you would like to place LifeGuard on "stand-by".

The crew will prepare for lift-off while awaiting the "go-mission" call. This saves minutes on lift-off time because the crew is already at the helicopter, and ready for lift-off.

You can also request LifeGuard to be an "in air" standby. This is a good option for when calls are a distance away. There is no charge if LifeGuard is cancelled.

If you have an educational opportunity and would like it included in the LifeGuard Newsletter, let us know!

Looking for other EMS opportunities? Check out www.iaemstraining.org



Dennis Lang says goodbye to LifeGuard

2013 has brought many changes to LifeGuard Air Ambulance. One change occurred in July with the retirement of longtime pilot Dennis Lang. Prior to his retirement, Dennis was interviewed, and this is what he had to say:

"I started flying in the Air Force in 1969. We all trained in fighter-type aircraft (T37's and T-38's) as those are the most difficult to fly. Once through flight school, I flew the C-141 (4 engine heavy jet) for about 6 years. We literally flew those around the world so I did get to see a lot of places. I left the Air Force in 1975, but missed flying, so in 1978 joined the Army National Guard where I flew helicopters with Michael Cufur and Wayne Scheetz. Michael actually asked me on the radio one day if I would be interested in flying for St Luke's, so I applied. I worked full-time for a year or two. At about that time, John Sadler was shifting most of his time and authority to Dick Miller, so we needed a part time pilot in addition to what we already had. I volunteered to go part-time since I didn't really need a full-time job on top of my other work, and it would be easier to fill a full-time position.

I was married to my lovely bride Sharon Halverson in 1973. We have 4 children ranging in age from 38-22 (yeah-we were slower that most in figuring out what caused that). The two oldest daughters (Kelsey and Roslyn) are married with 3 and 2 children, respectively. The third daughter, Evelyn, works at St Luke's and the youngest is Henry (obviously not a daughter). The last two are still in college and still single.

I will miss LifeGuard a lot. I have been very impressed with the quality of the people with whom I have had the privilege of working. I am still surprised how such a diverse group can be so competent at their work and be so congenial, all while working in such a stressful environment. I took the job because I enjoy flying and that hasn't changed, but the true reward for me is the same as it is for the rest of the EMS community—you feel that at least once in a while what you do makes a difference. You asked about missing "those spunky paramedics". I probably would have used a different adjective, but that one works, and the "chatty flight nurses". Yes, I will miss them all and the ground crews and fire departments that have done so much to help keep us safe all these years and so many don't even get paid! My thought and prayers will be with you all." ~ Dennis Lang



Upcoming Educational Opportunities

November 1-2	Tri-State Fire and EMS Conference	Dubuque
November 7-9	IEMSA	Des Moines
November 16	EMTB-EMT Transition	Kirkwood
November 19	Acute Changes on 12Lead EKG	Kirkwood
November 19	PALS	Kirkwood
December 3 & 10	Advanced 12 Lead Interpretation	Kirkwood
March 7-8, 2014	Code 1	Kirkwood

Have You Seen What's New?

It's been a colorful summer with LifeGuard as you have probably noticed. Our aircraft has gone from navy blue, to white, to red, and now to the New Blue! This new, brighter blue comes with a brighter vision and stronger focus on the flight program. While our program has implemented many new safety standards such as night vision goggles and on site maintenance following our partnership with Med Trans Corporation; we have also been part of the larger change within the Unity Point Health network. Part of this stronger and united focus is truly bringing to light the point of Unity is You, our valued partners in healthcare.

Unity Point Health has been working very hard to implement bright visions and branded standards of excellence within our healthcare system. You'll not only see new logos on the hospital and health system, but on our very own LifeGuard as well.

LifeGuard EMS Day 2013

We had a successful continuing education day on September 28th at St Luke's. Speakers presented a variety of subjects. LifeGuard crewmembers spoke along with St Luke's Social Worker Sarah Hefflefinger. Military members spoke on chemical warfare/terrorism which hit home with the recent events in Syria. Other topics included cardiac, hoarding, geriatrics, new trauma information and stroke. There was a drawing for one person to attend the Tri-State Conference in Dubuque on November 2. Kelli Hughes from Linn County Rescue 57 won the drawing!!

We hope that those who attended came away with some new and exciting information to share with co-workers. Thanks to all who participated and made it a success!! Special thanks to Sarah Sutcliffe, LifeGuard Paramedic, for taking the lead and organizing the day. 'Nice job'