

EMS Profile by Ben Oakley, EMT-P

# EMS Profile: North Blanco County EMS

**About us:** North Blanco County EMS is a non-profit organization that has been providing prehospital emergency care to the citizens of Blanco County for the past 40 years under contract to the North Blanco County Emergency Services District #1. We service an area of approximately 550 square miles, with an estimated population of 6,300 people. Our response district encompasses the Johnson City ISD and includes the communities of Johnson City, Round Mountain, Hye and Sandy. Our territory includes 44 miles of three heavily-traveled major highways (US Highway 290, US Highway 281 and State Highway 71), Lyndon B. Johnson National Park and Pedernales Falls State Park. Our central station houses our three ambulances, administrative offices and staff, crew quarters and training center. Our station is staffed 24/7 by our dedicated personnel, with full-time coverage at the MICU level.

**Number of personnel:** North Blanco County EMS has a total staff of 24 providers, of which 11 are paramedics, 10 are EMT-Basics and three are ECAs. North Blanco County EMS utilizes a combination of volunteers, part-time career staff and full-time career staff to make up our team. Medical Director Larry Miller, MD, has been providing clinical oversight to our system since 2006.

**Years of service:** North Blanco County EMS was established in 1972 by a dedicated group of volunteers and was originally formed as the Johnson City Volunteer Ambulance Association. Through the past 40 years of service to our community, North Blanco County EMS has steadily grown in size, capabilities and call volume. We made the transition to a combination department and began utilizing paid staff in 2006.

**Number of units:** North Blanco County EMS operates three Medtec Type III ambulances from our central station. All three ambulances are identically stocked and are licensed as BLS with MICU capability. We operate our 9-1-1



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ambulances at the MICU level, which are typically staffed with a paramedic and an EMT-Basic. All of our units are equipped with LifePak 15 cardiac monitors with numerous features including 12-lead ECG and end tidal CO<sub>2</sub> technology, as well as EZ-IO devices, CPAP, video laryngoscopes, 32 different medications, Stryker PowerPro XT stretchers and electronic PCR toughbooks.

**Number of calls:** North Blanco County EMS responds to 800 calls annually and has seen a 43 percent increase in call volume since 2006.

**Current activities:** In addition to providing prehospital emergency care, North Blanco County EMS is a very active member of our community, providing numerous other services. North Blanco County EMS established the William Watson Memorial Scholarship Fund for local high school students shortly after the death of our longtime leader, Bill Watson, who served as director from 1988 to 2003. Each year, the Watson family selects an

LBJ High School student to receive the scholarship. North Blanco County EMS holds fundraisers throughout the year for this scholarship fund. Furthermore, North Blanco County EMS participates in the Vial of Life program, encouraging residents to fill out emergency medical information forms and storing them in a container and placing them in their refrigerator, so that responders can quickly gather medical information in situations where the patient may not be able to provide such information. In addition, North Blanco County EMS works in conjunction with the Cruz Roja in Miramar, Costa Rica, donating expired supplies to them. We also operate a continuing education program that is open to outside agencies, as well as provide community education to local schools and organizations, including injury prevention education and CPR/first aid courses. We offer routine blood pressure checks to the community at no cost to promote wellness within our community.