

Physical Address Awareness Program as Part of National EMS Week
by Kristin Alberts

As part of the upcoming National EMS (Emergency Medical Services) week from May 14-20, the Oconto Falls Area Ambulance is holding a Physical Address Awareness program. As part of the EMS week, we at the ambulance are asking you as homeowners or residents in our Oconto Falls Area Ambulance service area (townships of Abrams, Morgan, Spruce, Stiles, Oconto Falls and the City of Oconto Falls) to pay particular attention to your home and/or business numbers. Could an ambulance or fire crew easily locate your residence, especially at night? Some numbers placed on houses are not directly under a porch light, or are just not visible from the road, and ambulance crews often circle the area several times before spotting the correct house number. Though decorative address signs are nice, it is important that they are also useful.

According to the Oconto County Uniform 911 and Physical Property Numbering System Ordinance: *“numerals indicating the official numbers for each principal building or each front entrance to each building shall be posted in such a manner to be visible from the road on which the property is located. Those buildings more than sixty (60) feet from the roadway shall have numbers mounted on a post, horizontally, a minimum of four (4) feet and a maximum of six (6) feet from ground level, visible from the roadway and within ten (10) feet of the intersection and on the right side of the driveway, and the right-of-way for the property on which the building is located.”*

If you are new to the area, or do not have a physical address number or sign, there is an Application for Oconto County Physical Address form that must be completed and returned to the Land and Water Resources Department, 301 Washington Street, Oconto, WI 54153. Forms can be printed from the Oconto County website at www.co.oconto.wi.us or picked up from the Land and Water Resources Department in the courthouse. After the process is complete, the county will assign a number and a sign and post to be placed on the property.

For those who have existing signs in a state of disrepair, there is a further chapter of the ordinance that states: *“the property owner or agent is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the sign and post once provided by the county.”* In addition, a later chapter in that ordinance says: *“Each town within Oconto County shall provide Oconto County with a plan for scheduled maintenance in order to replace worn or damaged numbers in accordance with ss 60.10(3)(d).* Therefore, help is available to you in regards to the upkeep of your sign—either from the county, your township, or from the Oconto Falls Area Ambulance service. However, we need you to take the initiative.

If your numbers are faded, or otherwise not visible, please relocate or light your sign so that we can more easily and efficiently come to your aid. Moreover, if you have any questions or are unable to place or move your address sign, please contact the Oconto Falls Area Ambulance Service at (920) 846-2662 for assistance. If there is no one available to answer your call, please leave a message with your contact information and address number, and a member of the ambulance service will contact you.

As part of National EMS week, the EMT's and First Responders have volunteered to assist wherever needed for the elderly or anyone else requesting assistance. A crew will come to your home and complete any necessary labor, including moving the sign to a better location, putting up a new sign, replacing faded numbers, contacting the county, or even trimming brush and trees that cover an existing sign. The last thing we want to have is difficulty finding you or your family in times of an emergency. So please, take the time this month to pay special attention to those number signs that we so often forget about. Though all of us at the OFAAS hope we don't have to use your sign, we will all feel better knowing that we can find you when you need us most.