

Emergency Medical Response in the Boulder Canyon Area During Construction
Provided by the Boulder County Sheriff's office

At the outset of the construction in Boulder Canyon, local fire departments, rescue agencies, American Medical Response (AMR), and the Boulder County Sheriff's Office met with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to discuss emergency response protocols in Boulder County and areas off the Canyon. As a result of the discussion, the following plans were implemented to ensure emergency medical services (EMS) were maintained for the residents and visitors.

1. The Sheriff's Office partnered with the Fourmile Fire Protection District to establish a radio system which is used to notify CDOT of emergency medical personnel responding into the Canyon for calls. The Sheriff's Office supplied radios to CDOT and Fourmile Fire Protection District supplied access to their radio channel.

When EMS agencies respond to incidents and will be accessing the Canyon, the agencies contact CDOT, who in turns, makes sure the canyon construction flaggers are aware and direct traffic appropriately.

Conversely, CDOT has used the radio system to report accidents to get emergency resources started.

2. Members of the fire departments and the rescue agencies have been issued a vehicle pass, like the resident pass, which allows them to move through the road closures for emergencies when they are driving their personal vehicles.
3. The Sheriff's Office coordinated with CDOT in placing an AMR ambulance above the daily closures, so an ambulance is available quickly when incidents require that resource.
4. The Sheriff's Office attends the weekly CDOT construction meetings and sends construction updates and lane closure reports to EMS agencies on a weekly basis, so the agencies can plan their response protocols accordingly.

This summer, there were numerous emergencies in Boulder Canyon. Below are two examples demonstrating how this system works:

One afternoon AMR and fire agencies were dispatched to the Magnolia area for a person having a medical emergency. Upon arrival, the agencies used the radio system to let CDOT know they had an emergency transport to Boulder. CDOT was able to quickly clear the lane in the blasting area and the ambulance was able to drive directly to the hospital instead of using Fourmile Canyon and Poorman Road.

A climber was descending from a climbing route in the upper portion of Boulder Canyon and fell on the hillside. The incident was reported to a CDOT flagger who forwarded the information to 911 through the radio system. CDOT was notified, again through the radio system, that emergency vehicles would be responding to the accident scene from Nederland and Boulder and made sure the flaggers gave the emergency vehicles priority through the construction zones.

The Boulder County Sheriff's Office continues to work with the CDOT project management team to ensure emergencies are handled in the usual timely manner, whether the Canyon is closed or open.