



## VALLEJO FIRE DEPARTMENT

### *First Responder Fee Information*

## FAQ

**Q: What is a First Responder Fee?**

A: First Responder Fees are aimed at supporting increasing cost for advanced Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by first responders that are not covered by property taxes. They are permitted under Section 13916 of the California Health & Safety Code.

**Q: Why have I received a First Responder Fee invoice?**

A: You have received this invoice because the Vallejo Fire Department responded to a 9-1-1 call from you or someone representing you, and a medical assessment was performed.

**Q: Am I responsible for paying the First Responder Fees?**

A: No. First Responder Fees are fully or partially covered by most medical insurance carriers. If necessary, you may need to provide your insurance information for invoicing.

**Q: Who is doing the invoicing?**

A: The City has entered into an agreement with Medic Ambulance Service (aka Fire Invoicing Service) to assist with fire department fee recovery.

**Q: Do I need to pay this invoice?**

A: No. You will receive a copy of the invoice sent to your insurance company. In the few instances where your insurance was not collected by Medic Ambulance on scene, you will need to provide your insurance information. Please use the contact information provided on the invoice to submit your insurance information.

**Q: I have Medical/Medicaid. Do I have to pay the First Responder Fee?**

A: No. Only fees paid by insurance are collected by the City of Vallejo.

**Q: Do I have to pay a portion of the invoice if my insurance does not cover the entire balance?**

A: No. The City uses a compassionate invoicing concept and accepts any payment as the full payment for the First Responder Fee obligation.

**Q: What If I do not have Medical Insurance Coverage?**

A: There is no out-of-pocket expense for patients receiving services from the Fire Department, even if the patient is uninsured. If you receive an invoice asking for insurance information, please use the contact information provided on the invoice to let them know.

**Q: I already received a invoice from Medic Ambulance, why am I receiving a second invoice?**

A: The First Responder Fee is a separate invoiceable item than the ambulance transport fee. They are invoiced separately for transparency and ease of transferring payment from Medic Ambulance to the City of Vallejo.

**Q: How did this process get approved or adopted?**

A: This concept was first introduced to Vallejo City Council in February 2017 to alleviate the cost of providing advanced medical care services, not covered by basic tax funding. City Council approved the [First Responder Fee ordinance](#) in May 2017.

**Q: Don't my taxes cover this service? Why is the City doing this?**

A: Local fire agencies have far expanded their original duty of fighting fires and responding to basic medical emergencies that are covered by general fund revenues. Today, more than 80% of all calls the fire department responds to require advanced life support, including intubations and the use of defibrillators. The challenge for fire departments is to ensure revenues match the increasing expenses. Collecting user fees in addition to receiving general fund revenues will create a more sustainable funding source beyond only property tax assessments.

**Q: How are First Responder Fee rates determined?**

A: First Responder Fee rates vary by city but are generally determined by totaling the hourly benefitted rate of a responding company, apparatus fuel and maintenance, medical equipment, and disposable medical supplies used by first responders. The rate is set in the most recent [Fee Schedule](#).

**Q: Why is my medical insurance carrier responsible for paying this fee?**

A: Pre-hospital care is considered to be a critical component of the healthcare system in saving lives, resulting in the support of most medical insurance carriers covering First Responder Fees.

**Q: Are other fire departments charging the same or similar fees?**

A: Yes. The implementation and collection of First Responder Fees has become an industry standard to fund the enhanced paramedic level of service provided by fire department resources and their staffing.