

New fire department emergency tools

By JESS FASANO

The Bedford Fire Department is now even better equipped to respond to a crisis situation with the recent deployment of additional Emergency Medical Services equipment on its ambulance and fire chiefs' response vehicles.

According to Bedford Fire Chief Shawn Carmody, over the last week the department implemented three "critical" pieces of equipment: a LUCAS CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) device for the ambulance, EpiPens for the chiefs' cars and Narcan for both the ambulance and the chiefs' cars.

Chief Carmody said department members received training on using the LUCAS CPR device earlier this month. The device delivers continuous automatic compressions to a cardiac arrest patient.

While all of the department's members are trained in CPR, the chief explained that fatigue could affect the person performing the life-saving maneuver, causing compressions to be inconsistent. In the past, members of the department were instructed to take turns delivering CPR to maintain effective compressions, the chief said. He described the LUCAS CPR device as being a game changer, since with the tool, "we don't have to do any of that."

Chief Carmody added that he has seen the device used in the field saying, "It's quite impressive."

According to the chief, the device, which can cost approximately \$20,000, will be an asset to the department, as last year the department responded to four calls that required CPR administration.

In addition to the department's ambulance, which has been equipped with EpiPens for several years, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEDFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Firefighter Keith Branche, former Chief Jason Siemers, and firefighter/EMT Austin Jacobson learning to use a LUCAS CPR device at a training session earlier this month.

three chief's vehicles now carry two sets each of adult and junior auto-injector EpiPens. The device allows emergency responders to deliver an injection of epinephrine to a patient, most commonly during a severe allergic reaction.

Chief Carmody explained that he and the department's two assistant chiefs are certified Emergency Medical Technicians and therefore able

to administer the injection, which is normally part of EMT training. He added that fire chiefs are often first to respond to an emergency call, so it is highly beneficial for them to carry the EpiPens in their vehicles, along with Narcan.

Narcan, or Naloxone Hydrochloride, is an opiate antidote that can reverse the effects of an overdose. According to information provided by

A LUCAS CPR device for the fire department's ambulance will help first responders administer continuous automatic compressions to cardiac arrest patients.

the department, Narcan started being used as an emergency remedy for an opiate overdose in the 1990s and has been added to ambulances in the last several years. Chief Carmody said the department's EMTs have been training to administer Narcan over the last year.

A statement from the department claims it is "always working to provide top EMS and fire services for the fire district and our surrounding neighboring departments by identifying equipment like this and ensuring our members are trained and prepared for such a situation."

The department worked with the Bedford Village Fire District in order to acquire the equipment, according to Chief Carmody. He explained the department started its request to the district for the EpiPens and Narcan last year, and made its case for the LUCAS CPR device at the beginning of this year. Money to purchase new equipment also comes from grants, the chief said.

Anyone wishing to learn more about the equipment or receive a demonstration can contact the Bedford Fire Department at 234-3133.