

## OCFA To Begin Implementing ePCR – Plans To Be “Live” By Mid-August

The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) has begun to fully implement the OC-MEDS ePCR. Beginning with Battalions 4 and 5 on July 22, 2013, OCFA’s plans are to implement the ePCR at one to two battalions per week until the entire Authority is “Live”. As the largest Public Safety EMS Provider in Orange County, OCFA encountered significant challenges which had to be overcome. These challenges were mitigated by a handful of dedicated staff who desired to see the project be successful. OCEMS had the opportunity to interview Captain/Paramedic James Cass; whose own hard work and dedication greatly helped the ePCR Project to a successful conclusion for OCFA.



Captain/Paramedic James Cass

**OCEMS:** Why do you feel that the ePCR project is important for OCFA and for EMS?

**Cass:** *Anytime a county or agency can get all the players on the same system, it will improve the functionality and delivery of that service. Ultimately, the world has moved into the electronic age and we need to keep pace with that and the new electronic regulations. Outside of that and despite the many challenges (and change) in moving from paper to electronic, it will improve many things. Paramedics won't have to complete redundant report after calls, there is quick access to field paramedic protocols - reducing errors. Information about the call (i.e. Patient info., treatment, 12 leads, etc.) are streamed to the hospitals and can arrive even prior to the patient. BLS/PAU units can help improve patient care on acute patients since they can finish gathering pertinent information on scene and transfer that info. to the ALS unit going to the hospital. In addition, the availability of statistical data provided just by completing the ePCR is like nothing we have ever had. It provides an almost “live” look at trends, training needs, and syndromic surveillance to protect first responders. Nurse educators will be able to reduce their time “manually” going through paper and will be able to pull better data quicker from the system for their education classes.*

**OCEMS:** Training such a large organization is a significant challenge; how did OCFA train all staff to prepare for the ePCR roll out?

**Cass:** *The process began almost 3 years ago with active participation with OCEMS in configuring the ePCR. This allowed early insight and ability to learn, understand and make suggestions to improve the software flow for the field personnel. Implementation began with the training of a core group of 6 field medics who did both ePCR & paper on every call. There were regular scheduled conference calls w/ IT, core group & EMS section. The Core group later went “live” doing ePCR only to work out problems ahead of time and identify important training pieces. That Core group along with Ruth Grubb from OCEMS, taught the nurse educators and then 10 months ago a larger second group of 35 field users were trained and brought up to the point they could go live. Together this provided the needed knowledge and experience base of field “go to” folks ahead of time for when the department wide training began. Training of the department was done over the last 6 months through two 4 hours classes, taught by one of the core users and 2 nurse educators. An additional 1.5 hour “refresher” class was held at the battalion level over the last month and we are currently going live 2 battalions at a time, with OCFA completely “Live” by mid-August.*

**OCEMS:** Do you have any “Pearls of Wisdom” that you’d be willing to share for other organizations that are making the transition?

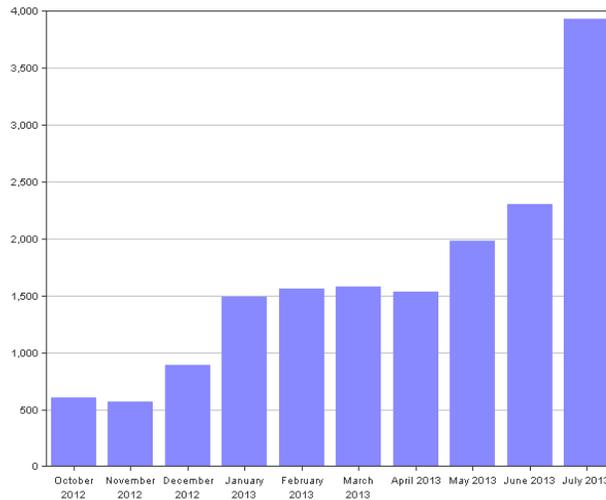
**Cass:** *This is a huge change for field personnel and a large undertaking to accomplish for the agency. Make it a priority within your organization! Have a project manager identified early on. Identify those field medics willing to do the work and support them in that process. Communicate early and consistently with the agency personnel as to where you are and what progress has been made. Layout clear expectations. Identify timelines and have a plan!! Ask your neighbor---no need to reinvent the wheel. Speak to those who have already done it.*

Who’s “Going Live”?

## July 2013 OC-MEDS ePCR Usage By Fire Departments At 28%

Last Spring, OCEMS set a goal of 25% ePCR utilization by fire departments by Fall 2013. The objective was to measure the countywide 9-1-1 monthly average EMS call volume (n = 14,000) and compare it to the number of ePCRs that were completed and posted by fire department personnel. Completed ePCR totals have more than doubled in the last two months with **the July 2013 totals coming in at 28%**. OCEMS is committed to the success of the ePCR project and will continue to work with fire departments to encourage agency implementation of the ePCR with a new target monthly average of **75% by Winter 2013**.

Number of Records by Date



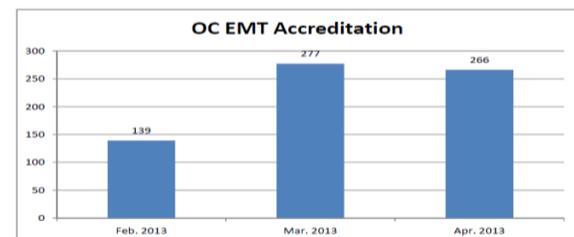
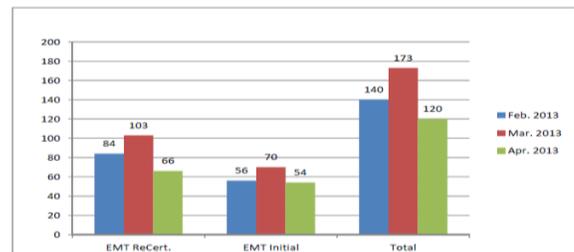
Incident Date	Count
October 2012	607
November 2012	566
December 2012	886
January 2013	1,493
February 2013	1,563
March 2013	1,583
April 2013	1,532
May 2013	1,978
June 2013	2,307
July 2013	3,932

ePCR Utilization

## Online EMT Certification System A Success: Walk-in EMT Applicants Taken By Appointment Only

The online EMT Certification system, a component of the Orange County Medical Emergency Data System (OC-MEDS) project, has been fully operational since December 17, 2012 and is now being used for all EMT applicants served by OCEMS. The system is operational 24 hours per day / 7 days per week and may be accessed at: <https://www.oc-meds.org/licensure/public/orangecounty/>.

The system has proved to be convenient for EMT Applicants nearly eliminating trips to the OCEMS Office in Santa Ana. Walk-in applicants have been reduced so much that they are now taken only by appointment. To schedule an EMT Certification and/or Accreditation Appointment, please call the OCEMS Licensing Desk at (714) 834-3500.



Licensure Management