



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
York County Department of  
Fire and Life Safety  
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## **York County Department of Fire and Life Safety Receives Several Awards During EMS Week**

York County Fire and Life Safety is pleased to announce that it has received several accolades during EMS Week, May 18-24, 2025.

“I extend my congratulations to all the award winners who strive every day to help our citizens, businesses, and visitors,” said Fire Chief Steve Kopczynski. “I am proud of these and all members of the Department of Fire and Life Safety who strive to provide excellent service to the community and who continue to work toward improving their skills and our life-saving programs.”

Earlier this week, Lieutenant/Paramedic Aaron Black was presented with the **2024 Outstanding Prehospital Provider of the Year** award by Governor Glenn Youngkin. A dedicated EMS provider who is passionate about patient care, Lieutenant/Paramedic Black has attended extensive critical care training programs to increase his prehospital knowledge and remains engaged in EMS training and education by choosing to attend additional classes, conferences, and webinars. He serves as an EMS Preceptor, helping to guide new EMS providers of all levels in their development with York County Fire and Life Safety. Among his skills, Lieutenant/Paramedic Black is ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) certified, is credentialed as an RSI (Rapid Sequence Intubation) provider, has completed his sanctioning as a POCUS (Prehospital Point of Care Ultrasound Provider), and is CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) certified. He is a 2019 graduate of the Hampton Roads Fire Officer Academy and has attended both Rappahannock Community College and Virginia Peninsula Community College.

The **Peninsulas EMS Council (PEMS)** presented York County Fire and Life Safety with two awards: “Regional EMS Award for Innovation Excellence in EMS” and “Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety.”

The department and our Operational Medical Director Dr. Cara-Marie Jackson received the **Regional EMS Award for Innovation Excellence in EMS** along with partner Riverside Regional Medical Center, for “Prehospital Blood Analysis for Stroke Care Using the EPOC Lab Analysis System.” This project, initiated in October 2024, implements real-time field blood analysis that allows paramedics to

conduct prehospital creatinine testing for patients suspected of having a stroke or transient ischemic attack, also known as a TIA. This advancement allows for earlier clinical decisions and for treatment to be initiated much faster upon arrival to the emergency department.

In addition, PEMS awarded York County Fire and Life Safety Captain James “Bud” Richardson with **Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety**. Over the past two years, Captain Richardson researched, organized, and facilitated access to advanced cancer screening options for firefighters, including ultrasound-based imaging and cancer-related bloodwork. According to the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, firefighters are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with various forms of cancer due to exposure to carcinogens, making early detection vital. Captain Richardson has not only made these screenings accessible and convenient, but he has also created a culture of proactive health awareness, potentially saving lives through early detection.

Captain Mike Stinson, the department’s Community Paramedicine/Mobile Integrated Healthcare Coordinator, received the **First Responder Award** from Mary Immaculate Hospital for exceptional dedication and service in emergency medical care. The award was presented to Captain Stinson for his actions in going above and beyond in the service of others, and serving as a role model within our community.

Congratulations to these award-winning members of York County Fire and Life Safety.

Additional information is available in the [press release](#) from the Office of the Governor.

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