



SUN CITY FIRE & MEDICAL DEPARTMENT TREATMENT IN PLACE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Don't my taxes pay for this already?

The Sun City Fire District was formed in 1966 to ensure a fire truck would respond to a fire. Prior to that time, there was no fire protection in the community. Since then, the department has changed into an organization that mostly responds to medical calls. However, we are still limited in our funding as if our main purpose was to fight fires. Despite serving an aging population with rising medical needs, the district continues to operate with just four fire trucks—the same number as more than 30 years ago. Each truck now responds to over 3,000 calls annually, well above national thresholds that would indicate for expanding service. Without the ability to increase taxes, Treatment in Place is a fair and responsible way to protect the emergency response system and ensure that help arrives when residents need it most.

Will my insurance pay for this?

Sun City Fire & Medical Department will bill your insurance first but has been informed that Medicare will not pay this fee at this time. There is a federal bill that was introduced April 1st of this year, H.R.2538 Care Act of 2025, that looks to potentially change that. The district has been told that some private insurance companies will cover the cost, but similar to an ambulance transport or hospital bill, the responsibility will be to the patient to coordinate with insurance.

Why are you charging for a lift assist?

Last year, the Sun City Fire & Medical Department responded to 4,000 calls that required on-scene assistance but did not result in transport to a hospital. That is over 11 non-transport medical based calls every single day. After much discussion and deliberation, the board decided to implement a fee for all medical based calls that we respond to and provide a service. A lift assist is a service and is considered a medical based call. Fire district funding is mostly funded by property tax and the Arizona Revised Statue has a cap on that levy to collect the tax dollars we do receive. With the current cap in place, the district cannot collect enough tax dollars to have the proper resources for the call volume demand of medical based calls.



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Why do you need so many people on the scene of an emergency?

Sun City Fire & Medical fire apparatuses are staffed with four personnel. This is the standard in the Valley and a requirement to be part of the automatic aid system. Automatic aid is what ensures that the closest unit responds in case of an emergency – even if its from another fire department. This staffing is essential to ensure that first responders are prepared for any given emergency.

Often what is called in can be very different than what our personnel discover on a scene. A simple fall can end up being a cardiac arrest where we have one person doing CPR, another person starting an IV, another person intubating the airway and the fourth person completing the patient chart and gaining information we may need to assist in the resuscitation. The two personnel on the ambulance work to package the patient, get the gurney in place, assist the fire crew on CPR and prepare medications that need to be administered.

It is also important to note that many lift assists require all four of our personnel to get the person off the floor and back on their feet, chair, or bed. Adequate staffing levels and equipment allow the department to be prepared for any type of situation first responders might discover – and ensure that the team is in place and ready to go directly to the next call they might get after leaving the last emergency.

What happens if someone else calls from my home or a fall happens in public?

If the Sun City Fire & Medical Department provides a service to an individual, it will create a chart, which will make the service a billable incident to that individual. So, if something were to happen to someone else in your home, they would be billed – not you. If the department shows up for a call in public or phoned in by someone else and it is cancelled and/or no service is provided, there will be no charge. The department will also not bill for any type of fire related calls.

 **Questions? Call us at 623-974-2321 or
visit www.treatmentinplace.com.**