County EMS FAQ

1. What are county and municipal levy limits?

   Levy limits provide the maximum amount a town, village, city and county may implement as a property tax levy on parcels within their boundaries.

2. Does the county have the authority to exceed the levy limit?

   Yes - State Statue 66.0602(3)(e) allows the county to levy outside of the levy limit for a countywide emergency medical system.

3. What is Countywide Emergency Medical System?

   Not specifically defined but it must encompass the entire county, there does not have to be one provider, and a service is provided throughout the county.

   A countywide emergency medical system does not require a single provider for the entire county. For it to be a countywide emergency medical system, the county could collect the funds and then distribute to the municipalities or local service. The distributed funds can only be used for emergency medical services.

4. Does this mean taxpayers will be taxed twice for EMS?

   No. Towns/city/villages will no longer include the cost of EMS in their budget as the county will be taxing the amount.

5. How will the volunteer ambulance service providers existing in Richland County be impacted by this change?

   The way the service runs may remain the same, but discussions may spur new ideas.

6. Why is the county levying outside of the levy limit for EMS?

   The rising costs of Emergency Medical Services created challenges for municipalities.

7. Why is Richland County ending Richland EMS service on December 31, 2028?

   State Statute requires municipalities to provide ambulance services, and Counties may provide ambulance services but are not required to do so. This change will place the responsibilities and decisions for future ambulance services with the leaders of towns that are required to provide them.

8. What is the State statute that instructs Townships to be responsible for EMS?

   Wisconsin State Statue 60.565 states “the town board shall contract for or operate and maintain ambulance services unless such services are provided by another person.”

9. Could Richland EMS end sooner than December 31, 2028?

   Municipalities may form an EMS district or join an existing district prior to December 31, 2028. If Municipalities served by Richland Ambulance service are ready to take over the service or transition to a new provider prior to December 31, 2028 the county could end responsibility sooner.

10. What will happen to Richland EMS employees, equipment or ambulance building?

    No decisions regarding Richland EMS employees, equipment or building have been made at this time. The County is willing to discuss this further.

11. What is included in the new EMS levy?

    a. Funding for local EMS providers
    b. 1/3 of the Radio Tower Maintenance budget – not the debt service
    c. 1/3 of 911 telecommunicator(911 dispatcher) salary and equipment/programming

12. What are the costs of each section of the levy and how is it calculated?

    a. Funding for local EMS Providers - Approximately $1.1 million – This number may decrease based on equipment purchases approved
    b. 1/3 of radio tower maintenance budget - Approximately $100,000
    c. 1/3 of 911 telecommunicator (911 Dispatcher) salary and equipment/programming Approximately $400,000

13. How are the funds shared with the townships, villages and city?

    Municipalities not receiving services through Richland EMS will be provided a check. They then will use those funds for EMS. Municipalities receiving services through Richland EMS will have their obligation covered by the County. This process will be in place until the County Board of Supervisors rescinds the resolution.

14. Where can I find how much each township is being levied?

    June 16, 2026 County board packet had proposed estimates under item #18. These amounts are subject to change pending the final 2027 budget(s).

15. What constitutes a district?

    An Emergency Medical Services (EMS) District is a formalized, cooperative governmental or inter-municipal organization created by multiple local towns, villages, or cities to jointly fund, manage, and provide 24/7 pre-hospital ambulance and emergency medical care.

16. Are there grant funds available if a district is created?

    There may be Innovation Funds available if a district is created and the service is transitioned.

17. Can EMS districts levy outside of the levy limit for EMS within their own district?

    Yes – Districts can levy outside of the levy limit up to CPI plus 2%.

18. Can districts be joint fire and EMS?

    Yes

19. How long does the levy continue?

    Until the resolution is rescinded by the county board.

20. Will a third-party EMS provider replace Richland EMS?

    The provider of EMS will be determined by the Municipalities and not the County. If an ambulance district is formed, this decision will be made by the Municipalities choosing to be a member of the newly formed ambulance district.

21. Will a third party mean the ambulance travels from a distant town like LaCrosse or Madison when 911 is called?

    The location of ambulances and EMT-type staff will be determined between the EMS district and their provider.