

## **Comment from Covington County Hospital Ambulance Service**

Roadway safety is of the highest priority to ambulance services working accidents. Currently, reflective roadside vests are the only item used to protect paramedics and EMTs as they work on the roadside. Unfortunately, most rural counties do not have enough law enforcement officers to control traffic at an accident scene. This unprotected situation predisposes the medics, firefighters, and bystanders to being struck by oncoming traffic. According to [www.respondersafety.com](https://www.respondersafety.com), 65 first responders were killed while working roadway accidents in 2021 (<https://www.respondersafety.com/news/struck-by-incidents/yearly-fatality-reports/>). This report does not include near-misses, which we know are immeasurable and enormous from first-hand knowledge. Last year, Covington County Hospital Ambulance Services vehicles were struck three times by passing traffic while attending sick and injured patients.

Ambulance Services need grant funds to come directly to them so that equipment can be obtained by the organization (not the state) to improve roadside safety. Direct funding to ambulance services will be a significant step in helping to improve safety equipment measures and standards.

Thank you to the DOT/NHTSA for the oversight and support of ambulance operations.