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### **Fire Department's Medical Transport System Earns National Accreditation**

The Oak Park Fire Department's superior medical transportation system has once again earned full accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS), a non-profit organization established to encourage and promote quality patient care in America's medical transportation system.

CAAS' national standards address not only patient care delivery, but also an ambulance service's total operation and its relationships with other agencies, the general public and the medical community.

Accreditation by CAAS signifies that the Oak Park Fire Department has met 100 percent of the standards defined by the ambulance industry. These standards, or benchmarks, often exceed those set by state and local regulations.

"Full accreditation by CASS is a significant accomplishment on behalf of the community," said Deputy Fire Chief Mark Puknaitis. "The residents of Oak Park expect a high level of service from their Fire Department and this is our way of demonstrating that we are prepared to meet the needs of the community."

The CAAS accreditation process is voluntary and, according to Puknaitis, requires a rigorous work load, comprehensive self-assessment and an independent outside review of the emergency medical services organization. It took nine months for the 72-member department to complete the process, he said.

The Oak Park Fire Department is just one of four agencies nationwide accredited in both fire services and emergency medical services. In addition to the CAAS accreditation for emergency medical services, the Oak Park Fire Department also is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), a non-profit organization that promotes quality improvement in the fire service through a self-assessment process.

The fire department earned its first CAAS accreditation in 2001 and its second CFAI accreditation in 2004.

For more information on the Fire Department's accreditations or services, call 708.445.3300 or email [fire@oak-park.us](mailto:fire@oak-park.us).

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