



## SUCCESS STORY



# Great Falls (MT) Emergency Services

Great Falls Emergency Services was founded in 1994 on a vision to provide paramedic-level ambulance service to Great Falls and all of Cascade County.

In 2008, GFES won the exclusive contract to provide 9-1-1 ambulance services to the city. They now function under a performance contract that includes response time requirements. GFES also contracts to cover Cascade County and Malmstrom Air Force Base.

In addition to 9-1-1 paramedic response and non-emergency transport, GFES offers critical care transport, disaster response, standby at special events, long distance ambulance transport (four hours to Billings), and mobile integrated health services.

In 2016, the American Heart Association presented GFES with its "Mission Lifeline GOLD level" award for improving quality of care for heart attack patients. The recognition lauds paramedics' use of ECG equipment that relays cardiac information to the hospital during patient transports.

Great Falls Emergency Services doesn't receive any tax subsidies. It relies on reimbursement from Medicare and other payers to operate so efficiency is crucial, according to General Manager Justin Grohs.

GFES began using Aladtec in early 2015. Previous to that, "we suffered," said GFES crew chief David Flaherty, a six-year employee who has worked as a flight paramedic for Great Falls' Mercy Flight and also serves with the Montana Army National Guard as a C-130 Hercules pilot.



So now with Aladtec, it's real-time. The trade goes through, it gets approved and now you have the most accurate schedule — always.

— David Flaherty, GFES Operations Chief



### DEPARTMENT INFO

#### ROSTER

55 employees, each EMT or paramedic certified

#### CALLS

8,000 in 2017

#### SERVICE AREA

Pop: 82,000, approx. 2,700 sq. miles

#### APPARATUS

7 ambulances, command vehicle, all sited at one central station

#### UNIQUE CHALLENGES

On-site coverage for 9-day run of Montana State Fair that drew 71,000 in 2017; Calumet Montana Refining; provide standby coverage on firelines for state and federal wildfire crews; stewards for one of seven Montana Emergency Preparedness mass casualty trailers prepositioned around the state; GFES also occasionally provides backup coverage to Native American Tribes in the region

[www.greatfalls-ems.com](http://www.greatfalls-ems.com)

Aladtec users since 2015



#### David Flaherty

David Flaherty holds an AAS in Paramedicine and a BAS in Healthcare Administration from Montana State University. Beyond EMS, he serves in the Montana Army National Guard and recently shifted from piloting Medevac helicopters to flying C-130 Hercules aircraft.



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## Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec

Shields Fire & Rescue, Bozeman; Livingston Fire & Rescue, Livingston; Pioneer Medical Center, Big Timber; Missoula Emergency Medical Services, Inc., Missoula; Madison Co. Sheriff's Office, Virginia City; Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital, Hamilton; Cardston County Emergency Services Volunteers, Cardston, AB; Lethbridge Public Safety Communications Center, Lethbridge, AB; Alberta Health Services - South Zone, Medicine Hat, AB; Pincher Creek Emergency Services, Pincher Creek, AB.

"For one, just the time and effort that it took to make an Excel spreadsheet, which was subject to human error."

"Our scheduling is fairly flexible. We have a full-timer complement; we have a part-timer complement, there are call shifts, we have standby crews, so scheduling all that stuff, just simply relying on my brain, was tough.

Flaherty appreciates "the reliability of the scheduling tools, with repeats and rotations."

Before Aladtec, he would make an Excel spreadsheet with the calendar, then all of a sudden, trades would start coming in. It was really tough to keep everyone updated with the most current version of the schedule. So now with Aladtec, it's real-time. The trade goes through, it gets approved and now you have the most accurate schedule — always.

"Folks like that they can get on their phone, check to see who's scheduled that day, what the next shift that's coming up, and what the monthly schedule is looking like. They also like how easy it is for them to trade or give away shifts. It used to be a lot more complicated with paper and e-mails, and someone would have to sign-off on the trade."

The agency is in the process of upgrading the Toughbooks on each rig, so in the meantime, crews use an onboard iPhone to fill out their forms.

Flaherty appreciates the ability to call Aladtec anytime for tech support. "Your support team is great to deal with. I've had no complaints whatsoever. Even when I call and ask a really lame question that I should know, I never get the sense that they're irritated that I'm calling to ask the same question for the 10th time."

Finally, Flaherty said he uses Aladtec's text messaging function "all the time. It makes it extremely easy to communicate with folks." He sends reminders of upcoming training meetings, deadlines for availabilities, and uses it to find coverage for an open shift." He hasn't used the Mandatory Message functionality but likely will.



Aladtec has so many cool features that sometimes I forget about all the things it can do.



Want to learn more? Let's talk.

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