

## EMS job busy, unpredictable



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Editor's note: Reporter Diana Mazzella and photographer

Justin Falls accompanied Currituck County fire and EMS Capt. Stephanie Flowers on a ride-along Friday afternoon.



[\(ENLARGE\)](#)

Fire and EMS Capt. Stephanie Flowers (left) jokes with firefighter Kevin Ayers as he unloads his turnout gear from the back of an ambulance at station three in Moyock, Friday.



[\(ENLARGE\)](#)

Currituck fire and EMS Capt. Stephanie Flowers uses an in-car computer to pinpoint directions to an emergency call off Tulls Creek Road in Moyock, Friday. Flowers, who was the shift supervisor Friday, was promoted to captain last month.

BARCO — Fire and EMS Capt. Stephanie Flowers darted from the road and made a U-turn in a gas station parking lot. She pointed her vehicle north toward Moyock and flipped a switch that activated her vehicle's emergency siren, which began to wail.

It's 2:11 p.m. Friday and Flowers' in-car computer has just alerted her to respond to a 60-year-old male having difficulty speaking at a home off Tulls Creek Road. The situation registers as a "charlie" class emergency, with "alpha" being the least critical and "echo" the most.

Flowers, who is the shift supervisor Friday, concentrates on her driving and doesn't speak much.

"I'm not used to having people with me, so forgive me if I don't talk," she says.

At 2:28 p.m. she's made it from Barco to Tulls Creek Road, but a bridge that is closed to construction forces her to find another way to the patient's home.

"This bridge is a pain," she says.

Flowers reaches the scene at 2:32 p.m. to find the Sligo EMS team has arrived ahead of her. A few minutes later, she and EMT Bonnie Miller and paramedic Stan Lawson exit the home without a patient.

Miller says she and Lawson examined their patient who seemed fine. Both have been on duty since 6 a.m. Friday, and the Moyock call was their first of the day. They won't get off shift until later at midnight.

Later Friday, Flowers drives to the Moyock fire and EMS station where paramedic Linda Ansell and fireman Kevin Ayers discuss the ways they are training to learn more of the others' job. Ansell began her career on the medical side, while Ayers started as a volunteer firefighter. Now, Ayers is taking paramedic training and Ansell is learning to become a firefighter.

However, she admits to using Febreze around her ambulance because she doesn't like the scent of smoke.

Ansell explains that most of the calls her station receives are medical calls with fewer trauma calls.

"You don't see as much blood as what you think you will see," says Ansell, adding she enjoys the unpredictability of her job.

"It's just never the same," she said. "It's never boring. Every call is different."

Meanwhile, her partner Ayers says he is rarely affected by calls anymore.

"The only thing that ever phases me anymore is the kids," he says.

Working in the EMS/fire service is like being in a family, and sometimes other workers are family, says Flowers.

For example, Ayers' father works at the Knotts Island station and his brother works at the Grandy station. Bonnie Miller's husband is a captain with Currituck Fire/EMS, and Ansell said she met her "guy," Lawson, in paramedic school.

Flowers heads back to the county's fire/EMS administration office in Currituck, talking about the chief challenge of being a captain.

"I guess ultimately being responsible for all these nice friendly people," she says.

She said in an ambulance the only occupants are "you, your partner and a patient."

"Now, you have everything," she says.

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By Kim

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Our communities take EMS for granted, and all too often they are not paid enough either. Major Kudos to all of the volunteers and especially the EMS taking care of us during some serious weather conditions. Hope you're feeling better Kevin