

The badge of a fireman is the the Maltese Cross. The Maltese Cross is a symbol of protection . . . a badge of honor; it's story and tradition is hundreds of years old. When a courageous band of Crusaders, known as the Knights of St. John, fought the Saracens for possession of the Holy Land, they encountered a new weapon unknown to European warriors. It was a simple, but horrible device of war, it wrought excruciating pain and agonizing death upon the brave fighters for The Cross. The Saracen's weapon was fire. As the Crusaders advanced on the walls of the Saracens' city they were struck by glass bombs containing naphtha. When they became saturated with the highly inflammable liquid, the Saracens hurled a flaming tree into their midst. Hundreds of Knights were burned alive. Others risked their lives to save their brothers-in-arms from dying painful fiery deaths.



Thus, these men became the first firefighters; and the first of a long list of courageous fire-fighters and first aiders. Their heroic efforts were recognized by fellow Crusaders who awarded each hero a badge of honor, a cross similar to the one firefighters wear today.

Since the Knights of John lived for close to four centuries on a little island in the Mediterranean Sea named Malta, the cross came to be known as the Maltese Cross.

Dalmatians have been associated with fire departments for many years. Why? Many years ago, Dalmatians were used to chase rats out of the fire stations and horse stables of London. The dogs also guided the horse-pulled fire wagons through city streets. Some modern firehouses still keep Dalmatians as pets.

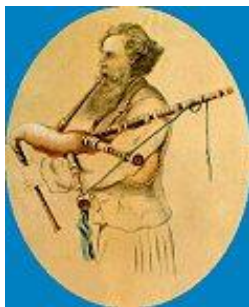


The **Star of Life** is a blue, six-pointed star with the Rod of Asclepius in the center, originally designed and governed by the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Internationally, it designates emergency care units and personnel. A similar Orange star is used for search and rescue personnel.



The 6 EMS aspects are:

1. Detection
2. Reporting
3. Response
4. On scene care
5. Care in transit
6. Transfer to definitive care



The tradition of bagpipes played at fire department and police department funerals in the United States goes back over one hundred and fifty years. When the Irish and Scottish immigrated to this country, they brought many traditions with them. One of these was the bagpipe, often played at Celtic weddings, funerals and ceilis (dances).

It wasn't until the great potato famine and massive Irish immigration to the East Coast of the United States that the tradition of the pipes really took hold in the fire department. In the 1800's, Irish immigrants faced massive discrimination. Factories and shops had signs reading "NINA" - No Irish Need Apply. The only jobs they could get were the ones no one else wanted - jobs that were dirty, dangerous, or both - firefighters and police officers. It was not an uncommon event to have several firefighters killed at a working fire. The Irish firefighters' funerals were typical of all Irish funerals - the pipes were played. It was somehow okay for a hardened firefighter to cry at the sound of pipes when his dignity would not let him weep for a fallen comrade.

Those who have been to funerals when bagpipes play, know how haunting and mournful the sound of the pipes can be. Before long, families and friends of non-Irish firefighters began asking for the piper to play for there fallen heroes. The pipes add a special air and dignity to the solemn occasion. Associated with cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, pipe bands representing both fire and police often have more than 60 uniformed playing members. They are also traditionally known as Emerald Societies after Ireland - the Emerald Isle. Many bands wear traditional Scottish dress while others wear the simpler Irish uniform. All members wear the kilt and tunic, whether it is a Scottish clan tartan or Irish single color kilt.