Annual Report 2010
Ambulance Department St. Maarten
Jackal Road # 5 Cay Hill

Call 912
AMBULANCE SERVICES
Preface

In 2010 the ambulance department took the initiative to organize Emergency Medical Services “EMS” week, from May 23rd through May 28th 2010. The highlight of the week’s activities was the motorcade called “The Big Five”. This was a large parade through the town and in the various districts with siren and flashing lights.

The entities participating in the parade were the Police department, Fire department, Ambulance department, Red Cross, WIEMS (Windward Islands Emergency Services), VKS (Voluntary Corps St. Maarten) and hearses from the two entities on the Dutch side of the island. The two private ambulance services and the Fire department from the French side of the island also took part. The purpose of the parade was to stimulate the general public’s awareness and respect as regards giving right of way. We may conclude that the effort to bring the various entities together for the celebration of “EMS” week 2009 was a great success. The week’s activities were centered mainly on the activation of the emergency number 912.

Even with the increase in the number of reports in 2010, the ambulance assistance department continues to make positive strides to provide qualitative Ambulance care. We have succeeded in doing so thanks to the input of our direct and indirect colleagues and the management.

This report gives an overview of the most important activities and developments. In this report, you will find the most important facts and figures. In addition, the organization gives account of the policy pursued in 2010 and we will indicate what has been realized with regard to the annual plan 2010.

Drs. C.A. Richardson
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1. **Introduction**

This annual report gives an overview of the most important activities and developments which have taken place in the Ambulance Department on St. Maarten during the past year. In addition, the department gives account of the policy pursued in 2010, as well as an indication of what was realized as regards to the annual plan 2010.

2. **Vision**

To provide optimal, efficient and professional pre-hospital care to the population of St. Maarten.

3. **Mission**

To provide effective, timely and qualitative assistance in the event of accidents, transport of ill- and injured persons, large-scale accidents and disasters.

4. **Main tasks**

- Providing transport for ill persons and accident victims
- Monitoring the quality of ambulance assistance
- Operating ambulance emergency room
- Assistance in the event of disasters
- Financial administration
5. Organization

5.1 Organization profile

The organizational structure is described in the annual report.

5.2 Workers & formation

At the end of December 2010, 24 workers were employed, divided over the following functions:

- 8 ambulance drivers
- 7 ambulance nurses
- 1 acting operational leader/manager
- 5 ambulance dispatchers
- 1 department head
- 1 administrative worker
- 1 messenger/cleaner

One specialized and experienced ambulance nurse was “detach” from AmbuCare, South Holland to the Ambulance Department St. Maarten for three (3) months.

During the year under review, 2 workers were employed and two workers left the department due to non-renewal of their contract. Two dispatchers were ill for a long time during the year under review, for a period of between 3 and 10 months.

In order to maintain the 24-hour emergency dispatch, additional dispatchers were employed.

5.3 Progress meetings

Progress meetings with the employees are held at the ambulance station. During these meetings, among other, the following issues were discussed: vehicle fleet, disaster exercises, roster planning, medical supervision in collaboration with the hospital (SMMC), in-service- and refresher courses, driving proficiency training, performance indicators and annual plan 2010, policy document minimum ambulance requirements, team building activities, draft operational manual for ambulance assistance, presentations to schools about ambulance care and specifically the activation of the emergency number 912, EMS week celebration, joint communication centre for the police department, fire department and ambulance, recruitment of personnel, e.g. dispatchers, ambulance driver/assistants and training/internship possibility at the ambulance assistance department for the two service organizations, namely the Red Cross & WIEMS.

5.4 Management meetings

On a weekly basis, meetings are held with the acting operational leader/manager with respect to the operational issues regarding the service and on a weekly basis the department head consults with the sector director/acting secretary general. This has changed from weekly to every two weeks, in view of the high work pressure within the sector during the preparatory phase to Ministry and ultimately to Country St. Maarten on October 10th 2010.

Every two weeks meetings are held with the Management Team (MT) of the Health Care Sector. The composition of the MT is as follows:
Participation in the MT meetings is based on equality and we strive for consensus in the decision-making process.

The meeting is held in accordance with an agenda on which issues such as Human Resource Management (HRM) can be traced back. Issues which required special attention during the year under review, were the preparations related to constitutional affairs for Country St. Maarten. The organizational structure of the Sector Health Care changed on October 10th, 2010, to the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour, when St. Maarten and Curacao obtained country status.

The agreements made in the MT meetings are laid down on an action list. Decisions which require further action are also placed on an action list for the purpose of monitoring the execution. The executive staff informs the workers directly in staff meetings or by memo, about the decisions which are important for the workers. General meetings with all workers within the sector/ministry are held at least once per quarter. These were held more often in 2010, due to the many changes and preparations in connection with 10-10-10, when St. Maarten became a country.

It is the intention that in the future meetings shall also be planned together with all responsible team members, e.g. team member emergency room, team member storeroom keeper and team member practicing/training.

Up to present, meetings are held with each individual team member.

5.5 Medical Manager Ambulance Care

The medical responsibility is at the moment accommodated at the Emergency room doctors of the SMMC, due to the fact that there is no medical practitioner working within the ambulance department who is capable of assuming this task. Two medications which are currently used are epinephrine and atropine.

These medications have been specified in the protocol which was signed between the ambulance department and St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) with regard to CPR protocol.

It is the intention to expand the medical stock of the ambulance vehicle in the near future, with, e.g. Nitroglycerine, Ketamine (Esktamine) and Amiodarone.

A clinical program has also been developed in collaboration with SMMC and the Ambulance Assistance department, in order to offer the ambulance personnel the possibility to gain clinical experience in the hospital. The clinical program has been converted to an ‘Affiliation Agreement’ which is signed by the ambulance personnel, the department head on behalf of the former island territory and the director of St. Maarten Medical Center.

The collaboration agreement with regard to the medical supervision must be reviewed. There has, however, been little medical supervision during the year under review.

The Head of the department has attempted to bring the various actors within the SMMC together to start up the discussion, but this has been suspended because of unpaid bills. It is highly necessary to review the collaboration agreement with regard to the medical supervision, because there is no specific Emergency room doctor who is ultimately responsible for the medical supervision.

It is important that the Ambulance Assistance department has a doctor at its disposal who will be is ultimately responsible and is the contact person for the ambulance personnel as well as the management of the Ambulance Department in the execution of their daily activities.

6. Ambulance Dispatch Center

The Ambulance Department operates a 24-hour emergency room and shares the emergency room with the Fire Department. Both departments are located in the rather new joint “state of the art” building for the Fire Department and Ambulance Department.
The work group for a joint central dispatch center consisting of members of the police, Fire and Ambulance department met at several different times during the year under review to look at the possibility of a joint emergency room. A draft plan has been presented to the Committee consisting of the

Department Heads of the three departments and a representative of the Ministry of Justice. Consensus has been reached as regards a joint emergency room and a project plan is being prepared.

7. Objectives

In the preparatory phase of the annual plan 2010, in comparison with 2009, we have opted for the development of 'performance indicators' of the general objectives which is applicable to all departments within the sector Public Health, Social Development and Labour. The general objectives were e.g.

a. The optimal development and utilization of the capacity of workers.
b. The timely indication of health risks and risks in the background situations of groups within the community on St. Maarten.
c. Respect for and service to the public.
d. Transitional Management of sector VSA and from VSA to Ministry of Public Health, Social Affairs and Labour.
e. Effective and efficient work.

The objectives of the ambulance department and performance indicators (Pi's) resulting from the general objectives of the sector/ministry are e.g.

a. Monitoring of risk factors for prevention
   Pi: Monitoring of two risk factors
b. Application of international standards
   Pi: Policy document ambulance set-up
c. Increasing the accessibility
   Pi: 24 hour emergency room, response time
d. General information about the ambulance department to the public
   Pi: Availability of E-information
e. Transitional management and continuity of services
   Pi: Financial mandate for continuity of services of the department
f. Developing capacity through recruitment, training and education
Pl: Plans for training and internship

g. Sick leave supervision
   Pl: Reducing short-term sick leave percentage to 7%

h. Partnership and Team spirit
   Pl: Increase Motivation and involvement

7.1 Realization of objectives /activities undertaken in 2010

Since the introduction of ‘performance indicators’ in the annual plan of the Ambulance department in 2009, the annual plan 2010, in addition to the objectives, includes a list of activities which the organization started in 2010.

In particular, it concerned 10 objectives, 9 of which have been realized or executed. It would be too much to mention all of these in the report; that is why only the most obvious ones shall be mentioned below:

- Purchase of a second mobile telephone for the picket service.

Ambulance nurses and ambulance driver/assistants during in-service and refresher course training.

- Training for in-service and refresher courses, for the Ambulance drivers as well as the Ambulance Nurses in collaboration with AmbuCare from the Netherlands.

- Technical in-service and refresher training for ambulance drivers in collaboration with professional training for Instructors, Professional Ambulance Drivers and driving examiners N.V. (VIVAR) from Curacao. Four ambulance drivers/assistants received certification as ambulance drivers and four received the in-service and refresher course certification. Three ambulance drivers also received the certification as driving instructors.

Marc Landa, Director AmbuCare of the Netherlands and colleague observing Tynisha Arrendell, Ambulance Nurse while applying intubation during the in-service- and refresher course training.
1st: Former Minister of Public Health and Department Head together at the handing out of the in-service- and refresher course certificates and instructors’ certificates for the ambulance drivers/assistants.

- Training EMT course for certification (Emergency Medical Technical) of two nurses without SOSA training and one (1) dispatcher and one (1) driver without SOSA training, in-service and refresher training of 4 SOSA ambulance drivers and two dispatchers. The in-service and refresher courses take place every two years in collaboration with the Foundation WIEMS (Windward Islands Emergency Medical Services) in collaboration with Howard University Hospital in Washington, DC.
- Organizing teambuilding sessions in collaboration with Dr. Judith Arndell, Psychologist with the emphasis on stress management, effective communication and professionalism.
- Presentation “Airside Safety Driving” by Mr. Wilson in collaboration with Princess Juliana International Airport.
- Presentation by Mr. Frans Veltkamp, Director FACE of the new software named Ambite, of the current CAVIS automated system of the ambulance department in collaboration with FACE (Facilitaire Automatisering Centrum Enschede). The new program shall be implemented in 2012 and that is why the current CAVIS system shall be replaced by Ambite.
- Approval to dispatch a specialized and experienced ambulance nurse from Ambucare, South Holland for three (3) months to the Ambulance assistance department on St. Maarten. This project was executed to support the operational personnel of the ambulance department.
- Approval in the third quarter to expand the operational personnel formation from the current 8 ambulance nurses and 8 ambulance drivers/assistants to the minimum complement of 10 ambulance nurses and 10 ambulance drivers/assistants, so as to be able to man two ambulances at the same time. It is the intention to reach the exact staffing in 2012, consisting of 12 ambulance nurses and 12 ambulance drivers/assistants to be able to man two ambulances 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. This means a required expansion of 2 additional ambulance nurses and 2 additional ambulance drivers/assistants.
- Approval during the fourth quarter to purchase two new additional ambulance vehicles.
The presentation of the policy document minimum requirements for ambulance and annual report 2009 to the former Executive Council for its perusal.

Approval by the former Executive Council to provide the WIEMS and Red Cross Foundation with gasoline for both ambulances, which were used to assist the Ambulance Assistance department during the carnival period.

Approval for the purchase of three (3) bullet proof vests for the operational personnel. The operational personnel asked for these because of the increase of gun-battles. The operational personnel were worried about its personal safety during this sort of reports.

The development and printing of ambulance posters and brochures with relevant and necessary information for the general public.

The organization and celebration of EMS week 2010

Presentation of brochures and posters to the then Commissioner of Public health, H. Richardson

Information campaign as regards the Emergency number 912, how to activate this and what sort of information is required to pass on to the emergency room, when ambulance care is necessary. This was intensified during the EMS week 2010.

This campaign was mounted through various presentations to members of the then Executive Council, Hotel Association, Lectures at school and an open house for students and selected classes, interviews were held with the management and with various ambulance personnel members on almost all radio stations and radio programs on the Dutch side including one well-known radio station on the French side of the island.

EMS program 2010

The week’s activities from May 23rd through May 28th started with a church service with Pastor Bell of Praise Tabernacle Church in Cole bay on May 23rd.

The theme of EMS week 2010, such as also celebrated in the United States was “Anytime, Anywhere, We will be there”.

The week’s activities were concentrated mainly around the activation of the emergency number 912, in various radio interviews with team members of the Ambulance department, the Red Cross, WIEMS as
well as two private ambulance services namely Ambulance Iles Des Nord, Erick Ambulance and the Fire Department (Pompier) of the French side.

Also, a television recording of the Government’s Information Service (GIS) with an emergency room dispatcher, an ambulance nurse and ambulance driver/assistant with the emphasis on the 912 emergency number.

Brochures and posters were presented to two representatives of the Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, ambulance posters and brochures were handed out at strategic locations e.g. doctor offices, banks etc.

Presentation of brochures and posters to a representative of St. Maarten Hotel & Trade Association (SHTA)

An open house was organized for two selected schools and classes. A power point presentation was given by the department head, a demonstration by various team members and a general tour of the new accommodations.

Presentation to students in the joint classroom of the Fire- and ambulance department
The week’s activities ended with a big motorcade called the big five Motorcade through the town and in various districts. At the end of the parade, a speech was given and then there were “hors d’oeuvre” for participating organizations and invited guests.

Motorcade

- Monitoring the number of reports of two risk factors, namely hypertension and diabetes was executed 100%.
- 100% of the response time was monitored and the 15 minute response time in emergency cases, remained at approximately 90%.

Monthly outline of risk factors

- Monitoring of absenteeism 100%, the absentee information is divided among the 24 workers and has risen above the established standard of 7% as compared to 2009 with the exception of the months of July, August and September.

The absentee percentage including long-term illnesses is divided over the months January 10.6%, February 21.9%, March 11.6%, April 13.2%, May 9.8 %, June 12.5%, July 5.4%, August 6.3%, September 6.9%, October 16.1%, November 10.2% and December 12.5%.

Monthly outline Absentee percentage

The lowest short-term absenteeism of 5.4 % was registered in July and 6.3 in August 2010.
• Providing information about the ambulance department on the general website of the Government.

7.2 Objectives/Planned activities 2010

For the year 2010, again an annual plan shall be made up. In addition to the objectives to be met, as described in the annual plan 2010, the annual plan 2011 shall also contain the non-realized objectives or activities started up in the annual plan 2010.

7.3 Objectives and activities 2010

- Monitoring two risk factors namely, hypertension and diabetes in patients.
- Conclusion and implementation of the policy document minimum requirements Ambulance department.
- Monitoring the “response time” of 15 minutes for emergency cases.
- Organizing in-service and refresher courses for the ambulance nurses and ambulance drivers/assistants.
- Training emergency room personnel.
- Information campaign about how to activate the emergency number.
- Organizing EMS week 2010.
- Monitoring and maintaining sick reports among the personnel under 7%.
- Increasing the motivation among the personnel by organizing teambuilding activities.
- Providing information on the website.

8. Promotion of expertise

In-service and refresher courses are organized for all ambulance nurses and ambulance drivers in collaboration with AmbuCare the Netherlands.

For the first time in the history of the Ambulance department, the department received a “detache” of an ambulance nurse for three months through an outsourcing program in collaboration with AmbuCare the Netherlands to support and assist as ambulance nurse on the ambulance.

Ambulance- and Fire department personnel training together in a reanimation case

All ambulance drivers/assistants acquired the required in-service and refresher course training in driving skills and speed driving of the ambulance vehicle in collaboration with VIVAR driving school in Curacao.
Three selected ambulance drivers also received the required training for instructors. The three ambulance drivers completed the instructors training successfully and these were: Yves Macaw, Alvin Daniel and Anthony Godey. They are now therefore official driving instructors.

In 2010 the “personal development plan” directed at psychological guidance and teambuilding was implemented for all workers of the Ambulance Assistance department. The topics which were discussed were e.g. stress management, effective communication and professionalism.

It was the intention to implement the specific training “Emergency Medical Dispatch” for the dispatchers in collaboration with Priority Dispatch Cooperation from the United States in 2010. This had to be postponed because of shortages and the recruitment process for new dispatchers. The training material arrived in the fourth quarter of 2010 and the training has now definitely been planned for the first quarter of 2011.

The ambulance department organized information sessions at school. Information was given including brochures and demonstrations of certain equipment of the ambulance department at the “Lions Health Fair”. In addition, upon request information was also provided to schools.

8.1 Courses

Emergency Medical Basic Technician (EMT-B) training for two ambulance drivers and two nurses was carried out by Windward Islands Emergency Medical services (WIEMS) in collaboration with Washington DC in the US. Five drivers participated in the “EMT recertification”.

The ambulance drivers participated in the ambulance driver’s course and the driving refresher courses for ambulance drivers in collaboration with the Professional training for Instructors, Professional Driving examiners (VIVAR) from Curacao.
8.2 Practice and Training

There have been practice and training with the Fire Department with regard to the rescuing of victims, driving proficiency training and training in “Mass Casualty Incident” (MCI), in collaboration with Disaster Response Solutions N.V. from the United States. The MCI trailers have also been delivered by Disaster Response Solutions N.V. Company.

8.3 Protocols

The department head has started with the production of a manual for the ambulance department. In the manual the guidelines and procedures of the Ambulance department are described. It is the intention to present this document to the Executive Council for its perusal.

8.4 Work supervision

Two new dispatchers received the required coaching and supervision during the last quarter, i.e.w their appointment within the Ambulance department in the function of Dispatcher.

8.5 Internship

None

8.6 Professional consultation

An attempt was made to organize a case discussion with the chain partners involved, without success. The objective of this is to improve the cooperation with chain partners in order to be able to offer optimal care to the patient.

9. Quality

Evaluation of the care

In addition to the trip forms, at the moment there is sometimes also feedback information in certain cases, of the executed treatments (actions) with the parties in question and discussed with other team members. In the future a quality system shall have to be developed.

9.1 Complaints /words of gratitude

During the year under review, there were no official complaints but an evaluation was done as regards the method of approach of the ambulance team. A message of thanks, in the form of an advertisement in the newspaper was received, i.e.w. the quick response and professional approach of the ambulance team while saving the life of a two year-old boy.
10. Communication

10.1 Internal

During the year under review, communication has been effectuated by means of newsletters from “GIS” or by means of memos and fax messages.

10.2 External

Website

In 2009, the Government proceeded with the development of a Government website in which information of all Government departments can be viewed. Information with regard to ambulance department has also been delivered to be placed on the website. In 2010 additional information was placed.

11. Cooperation with (chain) partners

11.1 General Practitioners

There was no contact with the General Practitioners associations.

11.2 Hospital

In 2010 an attempt was made to meet with the Director of SMMC as regards the interpretation of the cooperation agreement i.c.w. the medical supervision of the ambulance nurses.

The meeting never took place because of the overdue payments with regard to the medical supervision.

11.3 Care - and Nursing home

In the annual report 2010, the ambulance department had good cooperation with the St. Martin’s Home, in particular the transporting of clients from and to the SMMC.

11.4 WIEMS and Red Cross

These two volunteer organizations assisted the ambulance department during the carnival period and at other events such as the Heineken Regatta, etc.

11.5 Mental health Care

The cooperation between the mental health foundation and the ambulance department has improved drastically. There have been discussions between the management of the Ambulance department and the director of the foundation. A draft protocol has been made up with regard to the input of the police and ambulance department for the transporting of a mentally ill (KZ) patient.

11.6 Police

In the preparatory and execution phase of carnival 2010, we worked together with the police to coordinate the activities in a better manner. A mobile command vehicle was suited out for the first time and shall drive along in the parade. Ambulance dispatchers as well as policemen form part of this mobile command Centre. All communication i.c.w. the carnival were coordinated by this mobile centre.

11.7 Fire Department

During the year under review, the ambulance workers, now and again appealed to their colleagues in the Fire Department to assist with the lifting of heavy patients from a home or an apartment to the ambulance.

There was also good cooperation during car accidents in which the victims were stuck in the car. In 2010 there was cooperation in a coordinated manner during a bomb scare at the Princess Juliana International airport.

12. P&O

12.1 Absenteeism

In 2010, the absenteeism percentage rose above 7% with the exception of three months. This was due to long term illness of some personnel members. This percentage did not include pregnancy leave.
Absenteeism has been monitored closely and accurately since 2009.

12.2 Performance interviews

At the beginning of the year planning discussions were held with all ambulance workers and individual performance contracts were signed. Interim evaluation discussions were held and at the end of the year individual performance contract evaluations took place.

The majority of the personnel received a positive evaluation and was proposed for promotion. Introductory discussions were also held with all new ambulance workers.

12.3 Industrial accidents

In 2010 there was one industrial accident. The acting operational manager slipped in the garage as a result of a small oil leak from one of the older ambulance vehicles. As a result he fractured his left arm which had to be immobilized in a cast for a period of 6 weeks. There was no need to mention this at the inspection.

13. Equipment

13.1 Vehicle fleet

Since the recovery made in 2009 with regard to the replacement of ambulances, a total of two new ambulances have been acquired of the brand Chevrolet.

During the course of 2010 the experiences with this new type of ambulance shall be discussed with the ambulance workers.

Subsequently, a choice was made as regards the choice of brand and type of ambulance which shall be part of the standard fleet of Ambulance department on St. Maarten.

During the third quarter of 2010, an order was placed for two additional 4x4 ambulances of the brand Chevrolet. The two ambulances shall be delivered in 2011.

13.2 Medical Aids

During the year under review, again new (medical) aids were purchased, e.g. four specific stretchers. In addition two MCI trailers, including material were purchased for medical assistance and disaster management. 50 victims can be treated on the spot with the content of each trailer. The MCI trailers have been delivered by Disaster Response Solutions N.V. from the United States.

13.3 Vehicle Location System

The ambulance vehicles are provided with an automatic vehicle location system, V-trak. With the V-trak system the position of the vehicle is shown on the Geographic Information System at the Ambulance Dispatch Center. This is a means to assist the dispatchers with the efficient mobilizing of ambulances. The driving positions of the ambulances are tracked on the monitor in the emergency room. The emergency room makes use of this system.

14 Trip/Run statistics

In 2010 a total of 2057 reports were registered at the Ambulance Dispatch Center of the ambulance department. Of the
2057 reports, 87 were cancelled and 1931 were executed trips. The number of cancellations was less as compared to the years 2008 and 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Meldingen</th>
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<th>Trips</th>
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<td>1982</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1775</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>2059</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>2057</td>
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Table 1. Reports, number of trips and cancellations 2009-2010.

Cancellation of reports occurs especially because of called off reports and to a lesser extent because of making inaccurate reports or as administrative cancellations.

**Trips according to urgency:**

In the policy document minimum requirements ambulance services 2009 which was approved by the then Executive Council, a distinction was made between the three categories of emergencies which in the trip registration system CAVIS are equal to respectively an A-, B- and C emergency:

**A-1 (A) emergency:**
A situation in which there is a question of acute danger to the life of the patient or the accident victim or that such a danger is probably present and can only be excluded by the ambulance personnel on the spot. The ambulance must be on the spot within a maximum of 15 minutes after receiving the report.

**A-2 (B) emergency:**
A situation in which, on the one hand there is no question of acute danger to the life of the patient or the accident victim and on the other hand there are indications that ambulance assistance must be given as quickly as possible.

**B- (C) emergency:**
A situation in which the health condition of the patient or the accident victim shall not be influenced negatively by ambulance care, if not given acutely.

In attachment 1 of this annual report you shall find the overviews of the number of reports, reports on work days, on Saturday and Sundays, executed assignments (trips) cancellations and executed assignments specified according to urgency.
Attachment 1 Charts

Number of assignments executed as regards urgency in 2010

Number of reports divided over working days, Saturdays and Sundays in 2010

Number of reports 2010