

PASSAIC EXPLOSION 2006



The Fanwood Rescue Squad was among dozens of ambulances that responded to a boiler room explosion that knocked out water and air conditioning at St. Mary's Hospital in Passaic, NJ, early on the morning of Saturday, July 15, 2006.

The explosion took place at about 2:30 a.m., shattering many windows in the hospital.

The Passaic County sheriff broadcast an urgent request for ambulances from around northern and central New Jersey to help evacuate the patients to other facilities.

At about 4:30am, our pagers went off and Sgt. Jimmy Drewes and EMT Jim Baxter, the assigned night crew, responded.

Fortunately, there were no injuries in the explosion. But with no water and air conditioning, officials decided to evacuate the roughly 80 patients inside, with 57 ambulances from Passaic City and neighboring communities helping to move them to other medical facilities.

The patients mostly went to Saint Joseph's Hospital in Paterson, with some going to hospitals in Newark. Our crew transported two patients.

The evacuation took place as hot weather was settling into New Jersey. The National Weather Service predicted a high of 85 for Passaic City that day and the temperature was expected to reach 100 by Monday.