



# JACKSON COUNTY FIRE RESCUE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Jackson County Fire Rescue Recognized as Pediatric Ready – Gold Tier



Jackson County, FL — Jackson County Fire Rescue (JCFR) has been officially recognized as a **Florida PEDReady Gold Tier** agency through the **Florida Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Recognition Program (PRRP)**, a significant statewide achievement that highlights the department's commitment to providing high-quality emergency care for children.

This recognition, awarded by the **Florida Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) State Partnership Program**, confirms that Jackson County Fire Rescue has successfully met all criteria for pediatric readiness and

completed a comprehensive verification process.

“This achievement reflects the dedication, preparation, and heart our crews bring to serving every member of our community, including our youngest patients,” said Fire Chief Charles Brunner. “We are incredibly proud of the team effort that made this possible.”

We're especially proud to share that Jackson County Fire Rescue is only the **second rural agency in Florida to receive this recognition** and—out of nearly 400 licensed agencies statewide—the **14th overall** and the smallest agency to date to earn this distinction.

### Raising the Standard for Pediatric Emergency Care

The Florida Prehospital PRRP recognizes EMS and fire-rescue agencies that demonstrate excellence in pediatric emergency care, training, and disaster preparedness. Pediatric calls can be relatively infrequent—on average, EMS agencies see fewer than eight children per month—which makes maintaining pediatric-specific skills and readiness especially challenging.

By meeting these rigorous standards, Jackson County Fire Rescue has demonstrated a proactive commitment to ensuring that children in the community receive the highest level of care when it matters most.



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Research shows that pediatric-ready systems are associated with improved outcomes and lower mortality risk for children in emergency situations.

### **A Team Effort Rooted in Preparation and Service**

The recognition follows a successful on-site verification visit, which included scenario-based evaluations and a thorough review of JCFR's protocols, training, and community initiatives.

Dr. Phyllis Hendry, MD, FAAP, FACEP, Medical Director for the Florida EMSC Program, formally recognized the department during the visit. Also present was Tracey Vause, Chief of Emergency Services for Walton County Sheriff's Office and member of the Florida EMS for Children Advisory Committee.

This achievement reflects the collective efforts of the entire Jackson County Fire Rescue team—from leadership to frontline personnel—who contributed to the agency's readiness through training, planning, and day-to-day service. While several members supported the application and verification process, the recognition represents a department-wide commitment to excellence.

Through advanced training, mass casualty exercises, community engagement, and the continued development of programs like Mobile Integrated Health and Community Paramedicine, JCFR has built a strong foundation in pediatric care.

"Rural agencies face unique challenges, but our team has risen to meet them with innovation, training, and an unwavering commitment to service," said Division Chief Johnny Padgett. "This recognition belongs to every member of our department."

### **Strengthening Pediatric Care Across Florida**

The Florida EMSC State Partnership Program works to improve emergency medical services for children through collaboration with hospitals, EMS agencies, disaster preparedness organizations, and families. The program is supported in part by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and is housed at the University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville.

Through initiatives like the Pediatric Readiness Recognition Program, Florida continues to advance equitable access to emergency care for children, especially in rural communities like Jackson County.

### **Learn More**

To learn more about the Florida Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Recognition Program, visit the [Florida EMSC website](#) and [PRRP webpage](#).

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