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'Ambubus' on Standby for Major Emergencies

by [Lindsay Corcoran](#) (email) Today

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The region's new ambubus.

Photo Credit: [Lindsay Corcoran](#)

A new "ambubus," a bus-sized ambulance designed to deal with mass casualty incidents, was put into service for towns in the Central Mass. region on Thursday.

"Well, you hope it never has to be used," said Michael Dunne, the Homeland Security Coordinator for the Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission.

However, representatives say having this piece of equipment will be very beneficial if a situation should arise.

"This is an opportunity for us to assist the communities we represent in other ways and help to make a positive impact during incredibly challenging situations," said WRTA Administrator Stephen O'Neil.

The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) donated one of their buses that was going to be taken out of service and the Central Region Homeland Security Council spent \$75,000 to retrofit it for mass casualty transport.

"It was actually less expensive than we thought it would be," Dunne said.

All of the seats inside the bus were removed. It now holds 12 cots and can fit eight to 10 ambulatory patients. There is also oxygen, a defibrillator, EMT equipment, lights, sirens and radios inside the bus.

"During any mass casualty incident, the ambubus can be requested by any municipality," Dunne said. For example, the ambubus would have been used during the ice storm a few years ago or the tornados that hit the western part of the state last year.

The WRTA will house, maintain and operate the ambubus. They will have a driver on call at all times. EMTs from the town will staff the ambubus.



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Dunne noted that this is the third bus of its kind in the state, with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority getting the first.

"We actually sent the bus there and they gutted and painted the bus, fixed the breaks and that kind of thing before all of the new equipment was put in," Dunne said.

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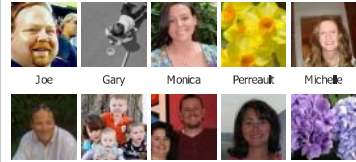
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