

CHARITY AIR AMBULANCE TASKINGS ON THE RISE

The Irish Community Air Ambulance (ICAA) was tasked to 127 incidents across nine counties during the first three months of this year, representing a 21% increase compared to the same period in 2020, and according to ICAA's chief executive the service needs the continuing support of community fundraisers and corporate supporters.



"Ireland needs our service, and this service needs the continuing support of our community fundraisers and corporate supporters" – ICAA Chief Executive Mícheál Sheridan

The Irish Community Air Ambulance (ICAA), formerly Irish Community Rapid Response and based in Rathcoole, Co. Cork, works in tandem with the HSE National Ambulance Service to provide both paramedic support and transport to hospital for seriously ill patients.

Figures from the ICAA show that March was the single busiest month since the start of the year, with the air ambulance tasked a total of 47 times; with 41 missions in February and 39 in January. Cardiac arrests account for the most incidents, with a total of 32 taskings between January and the end of March.

ICAA Chief Executive Mícheál Sheridan said that the taskings have increased year-on-year, during the first quarter, by more than 20% already this year. "This shows that demand continues to grow for our air ambulance service in Ireland, which can be airborne in just under four minutes of being tasked by the National Ambulance Service, and is 30 minutes away from most of the areas within its catchment."

Amongst the other incidents responded to:

- 18 road traffic collisions

- 18 farming accidents
- 15 general trauma calls
- 15 general medical calls
- 10 falls from heights
- 4 equestrian incidents

While Cork and Kerry were the counties most likely to require the service, the air ambulance also provided support to Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny and Mayo.

The Irish Community Air Ambulance can bring casualties to the hospital that best suits their life saving needs, not just the closest geographically. From the base in North Cork, the ICAA Charity Air Ambulance can put a 25,000km² area within 30 minutes of emergency medical care. The service is staffed by advanced paramedics and EMTs from the National Ambulance Service.

"Ireland needs our service, and this service needs the continuing support of our community fundraisers and corporate supporters. This year will be a significant one for our organisation as we grow and expand and continue to help those who need us," Sheridan noted.

ICAA RESPONDS TO CRITICAL CAR CRASH

Emma McGuire (22) from Douglas in Cork was travelling to Tralee with a friend on 8 March 2020 when they were involved in a serious crash between Killarney and Tralee.

"I'm so grateful to them, and so lucky that there was something or someone looking out for me that day," recalled Emma. The last thing she remembered before the crash was coming to the roundabout in Killarney, and her next memory was waking up in hospital more than 24 hours later.

She had been flown by the Irish Community Air Ambulance (ICAA) to Cork University Hospital (CUH) in a critical condition. Her spleen burst, she had to be resuscitated at the hospital and was given 14 units of blood in total.

Emma underwent emergency surgery that night to remove her spleen and the following day had further surgery on her femur and ankle. Emma also underwent surgery at Tallaght University Hospital two weeks later for a fractured pelvis before returning to CUH. It was June before Emma finally returned home.