



SOUTH PADRE ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT EMS ADMINISTERS FIRST PRE-HOSPITAL WHOLE BLOOD UNIT BY 911 EMS PROVIDER IN CAMERON COUNTY, TX

On Friday, May 30, 2025, South Padre Island Fire Department EMS responded to a call near Beach Access #3 and after evaluating the patient's condition, deployed one unit of Low Titer O+ Whole Blood (LTOWB) to the scene. South Padre Island Fire Department EMS began carrying one unit of LTOWB starting Friday, May 23, 2025.

This emergency response capability is the result of months of training, education, and collaboration between Trauma Regional Advisory Council -V (TRAC-V), South Padre Island Fire Department EMS, and South Texas Blood and Tissue Center. TRAC-V has recently implemented a regional LTOWB rotation program between EMS providers and hospitals throughout the Rio Grande Valley. The South Padre Island Fire Department is one of five EMS providers in the Rio Grande Valley currently carrying LTOWB, and the first in Cameron County.

Following the pre-hospital transfusion, the patient was transported to Valley Baptist Medical Center – Harlingen, a Level II Trauma Center, where a highly coordinated trauma team led by Trauma Medical Director, Dr. Daniel Bolton, immediately mobilized. Dr. Bolton performed intensive life-saving surgery lasting nearly three hours to control internal bleeding and stabilize the patient. Dr. Bolton emphasized the critical impact of the prehospital whole blood transfusion, calling it a “decisive factor” in the patient’s survival.

“The patient arrived with significant blood loss and hypotension, management with pre-hospital blood is essential, especially when faced with prolonged transfer times,” said Dr. Bolton. “While operative control of the bleeding was essential, the early administration of whole blood in the field was absolutely lifesaving. It bought us the time we needed to operate and save a life.”

This event marks the first pre-hospital LTOWB transfusion by a 911 EMS provider in Cameron County, signaling a significant advancement in prehospital trauma care and underscoring the importance of seamless collaboration between EMS providers, Trauma Centers, and regional entities like TRAC-V.

“TRAC-V commends South Padre Island Fire Department for their commitment to providing the best possible care to the patients they serve, and their willingness to participate in our regional program,” said Nathan Ramon, Executive Director of TRAC-V. “Whole Blood is one of the many innovations TRAC-V is spearheading in the Rio Grande Valley, and we would not be able to accomplish them without the support and dedication of our emergency responders and healthcare workers, like South Padre Island Fire Department and Valley Baptist Medical Center, who continue to raise the standard of trauma care in our region.”