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Smiths Station Fire & Rescue suspends ambulance service indefinitely



Officials say this reduction in services is the direct result of a severe staffing and funding shortage that has been increased by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Source: Smiths Station Fire & Rescue)

By [Leonard Hall](#)

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SMITHS STATION, Ala. (WTVM) - Effective Saturday, February 5, Smiths Stations Fire & Rescue is suspending ambulance transport operations indefinitely.

Officials say this reduction in services is the direct result of a severe staffing and funding shortage that has worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are extremely disappointed that it has become necessary to suspend our emergency transport capabilities. We started our ambulance service to fill a need and save lives and we have saved many lives," said Joe Walden, SSFR Fire Chief. "However, unfortunately, without additional funding and staff, we are unable to continue operations at this time. It is our sincere hope to restart as soon as possible."

Smiths Stations Fire & Rescue officials say they are working closely with East Alabama Medical Center's Emergency Transport System to minimize the impact of this reduction in ambulance transport service.

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are needed and required to operate an ambulance, we have been unable to offer basic employment benefits to our Paramedic's and EMT's such insurance, retirement, and competitive salaries."

According to officials, Smiths Stations Fire & Rescue will continue to hold a ALS non-transport license in order to offer as much lifesaving services to citizens as possible.

Officials say they hope to develop and submit a plan to the Lee County Commission that will help achieve the additional funding that is needed.

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