



# Watertown Fire Department

106 Jones Street, Watertown, WI 53094 • 920-261-3610 • 920-261-7527 fax  
www.watertownfiredept.com

November 21, 2022

## Re: 2024 CAPITAL PURCHASING OF SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE - AMBULANCE

This memo, and the attached documents, provide history and context to substantiate the need and the necessity to act on capital purchases that are not planned to take place until the year 2024.

In late September of 2022 I received an email from our ambulance dealer indicating the ordering period for requesting a chassis would open on October 7, 2022, and only be open for three days. Historically, ordering a chassis was not subject to a limited timeframe. Furthermore, according to an August 24, 2022, article from ems1.com, *"before the pandemic, lead times for new ambulances ranged from 90-120 days (from order to delivery). At this time, the wait is now 24 months and longer"*. The primary reason behind this increase is the availability of chassis.

This has created a situation where a chassis needs to be ordered a year or more before the anticipated delivery of the finished vehicle. Different stakeholder groups are urging legislators and the United States Secretary of Transportation to prioritize ambulance chassis productions and raise vehicle inventory. Until this happens delivery times from ordering to finished product will stretch over several budget cycles.

With these challenges in mind, the Watertown Fire Department has ordered a 2023MY chassis with a projected ambulance completion date of sometime in 2024. If production timelines change and the chassis becomes available earlier than anticipated, we are under no financial obligation to buy the chassis.

The fire department has a fleet of four ambulances, of these three remain in-service and ready to respond to calls. The fourth ambulance is kept in a reserve status and is used when one of the three in-service ambulances are down for maintenance. When a new ambulance is purchased the reserve ambulance is retired from the fleet and each ambulance moves down a position in the *in-service* rotation.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Travis J. Teesch*

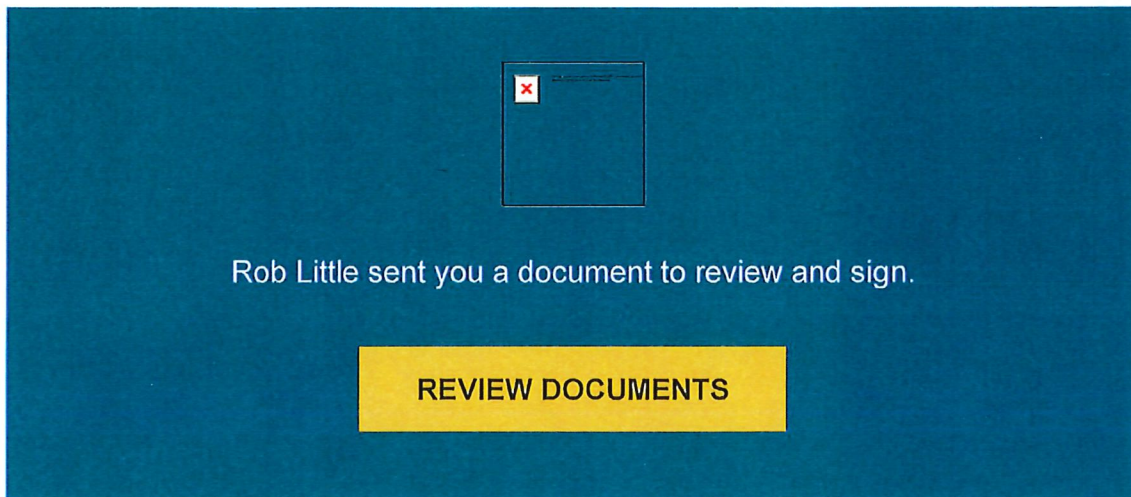
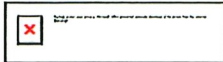
Travis Teesch  
Fire Chief/Emergency Manager  
Watertown Fire Department

Attachments

## Travis Teesch

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**From:** DocuSign NA4 System <dse\_NA4@docusign.net> on behalf of Rob Little via DocuSign <dse\_NA4@docusign.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 29, 2022 7:33 PM  
**To:** Travis Teesch  
**Subject:** [\*Suspicious Email\*] Complete with DocuSign: FORD PURCHASE ORDER FORM - WATERTOWN, WI.pdf, CHASSIS ORDER FORM - WATE...



 **Rob Little**  
rob@jeffersonfire.com

Travis, please sign these for me, this is the same Chassis as the last Life Line. and again, there is NO obligation here if the timing is not right when the Chassis arrives.

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## Travis Teesch

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**From:** Rob Little <Rob@jeffersonfire.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 18, 2022 9:35 AM  
**To:** Travis Teesch  
**Subject:** RE: Chassis

Copy on the 2024, just an FYI, it is all a "Crystal Ball" projection, but we are telling most of our customers 2 years from the time of order. I can't guarantee any of that...at the "Mercy" of the Chassis companies but 2 years from now is of course 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2024. This is also due to backlog's getting larger. Our current build backlog is over 300 ambulances. We build around 225 per year.

Have a Good Thanksgiving also!!

Thank you,

Rob Little, Ambulance Specialist  
Jefferson Fire & Safety  
Cell: 608-723-9126

**From:** Travis Teesch <TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 18, 2022 9:10 AM  
**To:** Rob Little <Rob@jeffersonfire.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Chassis

**WARNING! This email is from an external source**

Thanks, Rob, those answers help me explain the "why" behind some of this to the council.....We definitely are looking for a 2024 competition date.

Have a good Thanksgiving!

Travis

**From:** Rob Little <[Rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:Rob@jeffersonfire.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 18, 2022 9:06 AM  
**To:** Travis Teesch <[TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org](mailto:TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chassis

Travis

It seems there is no rhyme or reason when Chassis companies open and close their order banks. In the past they would stay open longer than they do today. It is never the same time every year. They only open on order bank once per Model Year.

For example, 2022MY opened sometime around March 16<sup>th</sup>, this year and closed before April. The reason for the short order bank time frame is they can only take in so many orders and then they cut it off. However for the 22MY they took more orders than they could build. So about 25% of our 2022 Chassis had to be re-ordered as 2023's.



Your chassis we have in the order list is a 2023MY. The 2023MY order bank was supposed to open originally around October 17<sup>th</sup> with build scheduling to begin yesterday. But, Ford has delayed the 2023MY Order bank until Monday now and they think this order bank will be open for 3 days is all.

The issue on the 2022MY since they took more orders than they could build, they were not allowing any orders to be scheduled for build without an end user FIN Code so that meant, we couldn't get any chassis for stock or demo's on the 22MY. We are ordering stock Chassis for the 2023MY but that will be yet to be seen if we get those this time.

The next Order bank for those that miss the 23MY will be the 24MY for the F- Series and that probably wont open until March/April next year would be my guess. Hope that helps answer your questions?

With that, since we have the chassis ordered, are you going to be able to order the ambulance side of it before the end of the year? Or do you have to wait until 2024 for a completed ambulance? Which if we placed the order before the end of this year could end up being a 2024 completion anyway, but I can't guarantee that if the chassis start to come quicker next year than they did this year it could be a completed ambulance before the end of 2023. I know all orders we are releasing to production today or being completed March/April of 2023.

There has be talk that we may not see the 2023 Chassis until 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. of 2023, if that is the case, it will definitely be a 2024 Completion. That is a lot but I hope it helps.

Thank you,

Rob Little, Ambulance Specialist  
Jefferson Fire & Safety  
Cell: 608-723-9126

**From:** Travis Teesch <[TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org](mailto:TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 18, 2022 8:30 AM  
**To:** Rob Little <[Rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:Rob@jeffersonfire.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Chassis

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Rob –

I hope you are doing well. I have been asked to prepare something for our Finance Committee regarding capital purchases beyond FY2023. I was hoping you could tell me how many times in 2022 did Ford open their **"Order Bank"** for chassis and how is that different than previous years.

Travis

**From:** Rob Little <[Rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:Rob@jeffersonfire.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 28, 2022 3:59 PM  
**To:** Travis Teesch <[TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org](mailto:TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Chassis

Travis please give me a call at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

**Rob Little**  
Ambulance Specialist  
Jefferson Fire & Safety  
Cell: [608-723-9126](tel:608-723-9126)  
[www.jeffersonfire.com](http://www.jeffersonfire.com)  
[rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:rob@jeffersonfire.com)  
[www.lifelineambulance.com](http://www.lifelineambulance.com)

On Sep 26, 2022, at 1:53 PM, Travis Teesch <[TTeesch@cityofwatertown.org](mailto:TTeesch@cityofwatertown.org)> wrote:

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Rob,

What are the chances we get a finished ambulance in 2023?.....I really don't want it until 2024.

Travis

**From:** Rob Little <[Rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:Rob@jeffersonfire.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 26, 2022 1:21 PM  
**To:** Travis Teesch <[TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org](mailto:TTeesch@CityofWatertown.org)>  
**Subject:** Chassis  
**Importance:** High

Hello Chief

Just checking on the status of ordering a chassis or two? They are asking us to submit 2023 chassis orders this week. They moved the order bank up to the 7<sup>th</sup> and figure it will be flooded with orders and shut down in as little as 3 days. They are asking for orders this week so they have time to process them in the system so they are ready to submit on the 7<sup>th</sup> with a push of a button on the computer.

Thank you,

**Rob Little**  
Ambulance Specialist  
Jefferson Fire & Safety  
Cell: 608-723-9126  
[www.jeffersonfire.com](http://www.jeffersonfire.com)  
[rob@jeffersonfire.com](mailto:rob@jeffersonfire.com)  
[www.lifelineambulance.com](http://www.lifelineambulance.com)

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**Rob Lawrence**

EMS One-stop

## When the chips are down: Ambulance chassis availability now at crisis levels

**AAA, IAFC, IAFF and NAEMT write to Secretary Pete Buttigieg to restore production levels**

Aug 24, 2022

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Recently, the American Ambulance Association (AAA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) wrote a joint letter to United States Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, sharing their concerns over the availability of ambulance chassis and its impact on the delivery of ambulances to all services nationwide.

[Ambulance chassis and chip supply issues](#) have dramatically impacted ambulance costs and delivery times.

The national associations advised Secretary Buttigieg that the issue is now at a crisis level and services and agencies across the nation are experiencing the strain of a vehicle shortage. All signatories asked that Department of Transportation leadership encourage the chassis manufacturers to prioritize ambulance chassis productions and raise vehicle inventory to the appropriate and necessary levels.





Ambulance chassis and chip supply issues have dramatically impacted ambulance costs and delivery times.

### **TYPICAL AMBULANCE PRODUCTION TIMELINE AND DELAY**

Before the pandemic, lead times for new ambulances ranged from 90-120 days (from order to delivery). At this time, the wait is now 24 months and longer. Ambulance chassis are supplied by Ford (accounting for about 80% of demand), GM, Chrysler, Daimler Trucks-North and Navistar.

In a typical year, the North American ambulance industry receives about 6,000 orders. Since 2020, that demand has continuously grown and in 2021, orders increased to 8,500 a year (an increase of 41%). For the past year and a half, ambulance manufacturers have been receiving only a fraction of their chassis orders from these companies and, as a result, production has slowed to a trickle.

I spoke with Chris Anderson, director of operations of Bell Ambulance Milwaukee, who said, "Order banks for GM and Ford should be opening any day now, for the 2023 manufacturing year - but getting a confirmation on how many chassis will be built is pretty impossible."

A further effect of the disrupted production has seen furloughs and layoffs of skilled staff at ambulance factories. This reduction and loss of staff could further jeopardize an eventual return to normal production levels as reinstating or recruiting and retraining staff could further add to the woes.

### **VEHICLE REPLACEMENTS**



The joint letter notes that supply issues are occurring at a time when ambulance demand from EMS providers is at record-high levels and when an EMS agency loses an ambulance to a crash, or when it exceeds its useful/safe life, they may have to wait almost two years to replace it.

Ambulances operating under contract to counties or municipalities are usually mileage capped and should be replaced when they pass the designated mileage or engine hour point. In areas of California, local EMS authorities have already granted exceptions to this point, but it then increases the number of vehicles to be replaced once the supply chain recovers and waivers are removed.

## OPERATIONAL PERIL

The joint associations observe that while the nation faces supply chain issues in every sector, this issue represents a rapidly emerging threat to public safety. The lack of proper, new and serviceable equipment places additional pressure on an EMS system that is already over-stressed. As vehicle holdings reduce, demand on EMS increases, and in addition to still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are in the middle of both [hurricane](#) and peak fire seasons, during which [ambulance strike teams](#) could be deployed in support.

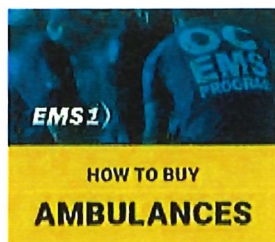
This year, lack of ambulances and crews could add to the depth of such emergencies. Pointing to Secretary Buttigieg's own departmental initiative to reduce roadway fatalities with enhanced levels of post-crash care, the letter's authors note that the availability of ambulances is a critical element of post-crash care, the safety of the patients and of the first responders, and action must be taken immediately.

## THE ASK

AAA, IAFC, IAFF and NAEMT, as well as ambulance manufacturers, have been raising this issue with the chassis manufacturers, federal government organizations and lawmakers across the country, all to no meaningful avail, and they have little choice but to formally bring it to the attention of the Secretary.

Even though manufacturers have already indicated that their supply and construction issues will continue well into 2023, Secretary Buttigieg has been asked to step in. He has been asked to help resolve this situation and work with Ford, GM, Chrysler, Daimler Trucks-North and Navistar to prioritize EMS by allocating a larger portion of their builds to ambulance manufacturers.

It remains to be seen if the letter gets any traction and the secretary responds, but, as the saying goes, the squeaky wheel gets the grease ... if there is any in stock!



### Learn more

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Download this EMS1 ambulances buying guide to learn key steps for product selection, purchasing and implementation

## About the author

Rob Lawrence has been a leader in civilian and military EMS for over a quarter of a century. He is currently the director of strategic implementation for PRO EMS and its educational arm, Prodigy EMS, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and part-time executive director of the California Ambulance Association.

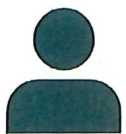
He previously served as the chief operating officer of the Richmond Ambulance Authority (Virginia), which won both state and national EMS Agency of the Year awards during his 10-year tenure. Additionally, he served as COO for Paramedics Plus in Alameda County, California.

Prior to emigrating to the U.S. in 2008, Rob served as the COO for the East of England Ambulance Service in Suffolk County, England, and as the executive director of operations and service development for the East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust. Rob is a former Army officer and graduate of the UK's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and served worldwide in a 20-year military career encompassing many prehospital and evacuation leadership roles.

Rob is a board member of the Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration (AIMHI) as well as chair of the American Ambulance Association's Communications Committee. He writes and podcasts for EMS1.com and is a member of the [EMS1 Editorial Advisory Board](#). Connect with him on [Twitter](#).

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Posted by **afairfield1** Aug 24, 2022 at 7:03 PM

This is such a need right now. We just redo a chassis that we ordered over 2 years ago for a remount. We are still waiting for the other 2 that they have canceled from FORD due to them saying that that is not going to production. Ram is worse they said they are at least 3 years out. When does it matter that the citizens health matters. Don't get me started on parts. Just as bad. Hopefully this gets a bonfire lite under someone's rear end.

♥ 0






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