

Emergencies on increase

By ROGER ROY

Rescue units and fire engines in Maitland and Winter Park are responding to more emergencies this year than last, but department officials say the increases are no cause for alarm.

Winter Park Fire Chief Sid Ballou said his department answered an average of 165 calls a month in the first six months of this year, up about 10 percent from the same period last year.

Ballou said the department's six paramedics are being called about 100 times a month. The other calls are a mixture of "anything from a power line down to a public assistance call," including fire alarms, he said.

The increase in the number of calls is no burden on the department, Ballou said, because "the number of alarms tends to fluctuate up and down every year."

Requests for fire and rescue units in

Maitland are up almost 15 percent, totaling 315 responses in the first six months of this year, according to Jan Kassab, senior department paramedic.

Kossab attributes the increase to an expanded public awareness of the department's services.

The department's four paramedics are being called more often, Kassab said, "because, since (paramedic) service started a couple of years ago, it's become more familiar to the people, and they're starting to take better advantage of (the service)."

Which department has been the busiest this year?

Based on the total number of runs, Winter Park was called far more often, in fact three times as often, as Maitland in the first half of this year.

Compared to the number of residents, however, Maitland is slightly more active, with that department responding an average of 29 times per 1,000 population, compared with Winter Park's average of 25.