

Safety workers out in force for marathon

9 medical stations situated along the 26.2-mile course

By Patti Zarling Épzarling@greenbaypressgazette.com ÉMay 15, 2008

Ensuring that the thousands of runners pounding the pavement during Sunday's Cellcom Green Bay Marathon remain safe requires plenty of medical and public safety personnel.

There will be nine medical stations along the 26.2-mile course, and area police and fire departments will have extra officers on hand to direct traffic and provide security.

Runners' health

Each medical station on the course will have first aid capabilities and transportation will be on hand to rush a participant to the hospital if needed.

The main medical station near the finish line in the Lambeau Field lot will have a full staff of health professionals, including paramedics, nurses and doctors. That main station also will be able to take care of runners if they become dehydrated.

Dehydration tends to be the most common complaint of marathoners, said Heidi Gutschow of Prevea Sports Medicine, who serves as medical coordinator for the marathon. Chafing, blisters and cramps also slow down runners.

Problems can be more serious.

The Vilas County Sheriff's Department says a man died during last weekend's Journeys Marathon. Robert Zapranoff, 68, of Mercer, was pronounced dead at Eagle River Memorial Hospital.

While no one has died while running the Green Bay marathon, Gutschow said it could happen.

"We've had one diabetic runner who had complications due to their diabetes. Otherwise the main thing is dehydration."

Near the end of the race, people often notice their knees hurt, she said, so many will stop at medical stations for bags of ice.

"Cramping is another big one in the hamstrings or the calves," she said.

People also might suffer from a turned ankle if they hit a pothole or edge of the sidewalk while running, she said.

Hot weather also can have an impact on runners so it's helped that the marathon has been moved from June to mid-May, she said. Sunday's forecast calls for partly sunny skies and a high of 61, according to the National Weather Service.

However, runners also suffer from dehydration in cooler weather, Gutschow said.

"If it's cooler they don't want to drink as much, but the sweat process remains the same," she said.

Traffic

The Ashwaubenon Public Safety Department will have 18 extra officers working Sunday to monitor the part of the marathon that threads through the village, Lt. Scott Schermitzler said.

Most officers will be on hand from 6:30-11 a.m., though some will be working until later in the afternoon. They will monitor intersections without stop signs or signal lights, Schermitzler said. The department may use volunteers to man other intersections, he said.

Parking will be restricted for most of the route in the village, he said.

Schermitzler encourages motorists to avoid Oneida Street from Lombardi to Morris avenues if at all possible during marathon hours. A portion of Oneida will be closed anyway, he said, but even for other drivers, he suggested using Ridge Road or Ashland Avenue to avoid marathon congestion.

Security is an issue when 8,000 people are moving through the village, he said.

"Any time you're dealing with that many people, it's hard," Schermitzler said. "We try to keep our finger on it. We've brainstormed about what could possibly happen, and we've prepared."