

EMTs across New Jersey to protest Corzine's proposal to cut training fund

by [Tanya Drobness](#)/The Star-Ledger

Wednesday May 06, 2009, 12:49 PM

MORRISTOWN -- Calling Gov. Jon Corzine's proposal to redirect millions from the EMT Training Fund a "raid," more than 45 ambulance squads and hundreds of people from around Morris County and throughout the state are expected to hold a protest tonight on the Morristown Green. Corzine announced last month that \$4 million would be reallocated to the general treasury in an attempt to relieve the budget crisis.

Emergency medical technicians said the fund maintains training for volunteer EMTs and is a critical preparedness and retention tool for EMS agencies, which also comprise volunteers. Event organizers said Corzine's actions would leave \$400,000 in the EMT Training Fund as of June 1, 2009. The EMT Training Fund currently spends \$1 million more than it takes in each year, organizers said.

The cut would discontinue training for state volunteer EMTs and force them to pay for their own training to donate their time to their communities, organizers said. Assemblyman Michael Patrick Carroll (R-25), Assemblyman Richard Merkt (R-25), Sen. Anthony Bucco (R-25), Morris County Freeholder Doug Cabana, who is also liaison to the county Department of Law and Public Safety, are expected to speak.

New Jersey State First Aid Council President Sue Van Orden and New Jersey EMS Educator's Association President John Mateus will also attend.

The event will kick-off at 6 p.m. with a group photo of the ambulances and EMTs a couple blocks away from the Morristown Green. A convoy of vehicles will make their way to the Green for the 6:30 p.m. rally. There will be food, music, and discussions on the next steps to save the EMT Training Fund, organizers said.

The Morristown Ambulance Squad is a volunteer nonprofit organization that has been providing free emergency medical services to the town for nearly 50 years.