# Paramedic receives community order for drug-driving ambulance crash



A paramedic from Altrincham has received an 18-month community order following a serious incident where he crashed an ambulance while responding to a 999 call, with investigations revealing he was under the influence of cocaine at the time of the collision. Colin Steward, 54, was behind the wheel of the emergency vehicle, which had its blue lights flashing, when the crash occurred on the A34 in Burnage, Manchester, on August 28 of last year.

Post-accident drug tests indicated that Steward had nearly five times the legal limit of benzoylecgonine, a metabolite of cocaine, in his system, with readings showing 240 micrograms per litre of blood, significantly exceeding the legal threshold of 50 micrograms. Steward admitted to drug driving and was subsequently brought before magistrates in Manchester for sentencing.

Brendon Hart, the chair of the bench, noted that under “normal circumstances” a jail term would have been warranted, but he ultimately spared Steward from incarceration, highlighting his “exemplary” service in the community and the lives he had potentially saved during his career as a paramedic. However, Hart remarked that “whatever the reason that caused your spiral downwards it is no excuse” for Steward's actions.

Following the crash, which resulted in three individuals requiring hospital treatment, the North West Ambulance Service condemned Steward’s conduct as “completely unacceptable.” A spokesperson for the service confirmed that Steward no longer works for the organisation, marking the end of his employment following the incident. It is understood that he has been dismissed and is currently unemployed. In addition to the community order, Steward has also been banned from driving for 28 months.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-driving-and-vehicle-impairment/drug-driving-and-vehicle-impairment> - This URL provides information on the legal threshold for drug driving in the UK, which includes the legal limit for benzoylecgonine, a metabolite of cocaine.
* <https://www.nwas.nhs.uk/news/north-west-ambulance-service-statement-internal-investigations> - This URL could potentially provide statements from the North West Ambulance Service regarding internal investigations into incidents involving their staff, though it may not directly address Colin Steward's case.
* <https://www.courtsandtribunals.gov.uk/courts/manchester-magistrates-court> - This URL provides information about Manchester Magistrates Court, where Colin Steward's case was heard, highlighting the legal process and court activities.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/drug-driving-and-vehicle-impairment-offences> - This URL explains drug driving offenses in the UK, including penalties and legal considerations, relevant to Colin Steward's admission of drug driving.
* <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/drug-driving> - This URL offers guidance on drug driving laws and prosecution, applicable when considering Colin Steward's case and the decision-making behind his community order.