# Former paramedic avoids jail after crashing ambulance while drug driving



Colin Steward, a 54-year-old former paramedic, has been spared a jail sentence following a serious incident in which he crashed an ambulance while responding to a 999 call. The crash occurred on August 28, 2022, on the A34 in Burnage, Manchester. The emergency vehicle, equipped with flashing blue lights, was involved in the collision that led to three individuals receiving hospital treatment.

Post-accident drug tests revealed that Steward had nearly five times the legal limit of benzoylecgonine, a metabolite of cocaine, in his bloodstream. Specifically, results indicated that he had 240 micrograms of the substance per litre of blood, while the legal limit stands at 50 micrograms. Steward admitted to drug driving, which resulted in his appearance before justices in Manchester.

During the sentencing, Brendon Hart, the chair of the bench, acknowledged Steward's prior service and noted his "exemplary" record in the emergency services. Hart stated that, under "normal circumstances", a jail sentence would have been appropriate. However, he opted to impose a community order instead, which includes 100 hours of unpaid community service and a 28-month driving ban. He mentioned, "You have served the community and probably saved a number of lives," while emphasising that despite Steward's past contributions, there could be no justification for his actions, stating, "Whatever the reason that caused your spiral downwards it is no excuse."

Following the incident, the North West Ambulance Service described Steward's conduct as "completely unacceptable" and confirmed that he is no longer associated with the organisation. It has been reported that Steward, who resided in Altrincham, Greater Manchester, was dismissed from his position and is currently unemployed.

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