

Pet paramedics

Animal ambulance ensures your injured little buddy isn't so far from a life-saving vet

by [CHRIS BARRY](#)

Name: Rodney McLean

Age: 39

Occupation: Co-proprietor of MTL-K911

Bio: This hearty Verdun resident had been thinking for almost half a year that a pet courier/ambulance service was just the thing Montreal needed, when suddenly, while taking his Labrador pooch for a stroll along the lakeshore early last summer, the hound emerged from Lac St. Louis with “cuts so bad that if I hadn't had a vehicle, he would have bled to death for sure.” So McLean and his friend and business partner Wayne Smith decided three months ago that it was finally time to launch MTL-K911. “We first e-mailed veterinary clinics around the city to get their reaction to the idea and, seriously, within six hours, our inbox was completely full—all responses saying how fantastic an idea it was.” Since then, they've been working pretty well non-stop, escorting domestic pets to animal hospitals 24/7 in both emergency and non-emergency situations, performing first aid when necessary. He drives a pragmatic 2004 Mazda 3.



Whose uses MTL-K911? “It really varies. During the day, we mostly do courier calls, like the little old lady who wants to have her poodle clipped at the groomer or the young person who doesn't have the transportation to get their dog to the vet for a simple appointment. After 8 p.m., it's emergency calls all night long. Somebody's dog has been hit by a car, is lying there dying in the street, and the person doesn't want to just leave their dog there like that. This sort of thing. Roughly 90 per cent of the calls we get are emergency calls.”

What's so hard about calling a cab to take your pet to the vet? “Because a lot of cabs refuse. You know, when my dog cut himself, I couldn't get a cab to pick us up. He was bleeding too much. I remember thinking, like, ‘How dare you, this is a member of my family, this is extremely important,’ but no cabs would pick us up. Also, sometimes it's just too emotional for people to bring their pets to the vet to be euthanized—or whatever—after being hit by a car or something. Sometimes the dogs are in such bad shape it's even hard for me to see their condition. Like, their intestines hanging outside their stomach. Sometimes you arrive and the owner is in the next room crying, they just don't want to see their beloved friend in this condition. It's really a lot to deal with for many people.”

If I were to call K911 at 1 a.m. on a Monday morning in a panic 'cause my pet turtle Mr. Snugglepuss stopped smiling for some reason and possibly needed veterinary attention, how long would it take MTL-K911 to get to my downtown digs? “At night, when there’s less traffic, and depending where we were when you called, we’d probably get there within 20 to 30 minutes. In the day, when there’s more traffic, it might take longer though.”

What the service will cost you: “In Montreal, emergency service costs \$119, off-island is based on mileage – please call us for details. Our daytime courier service depends on the situation, but it’s generally between \$30 and \$50.”

K911’s emergency number: (514) 677-4357.

Last book read: *The Secret*, by Rhonda Byrne.

Musical preferences: Rolling Stones, Alanis Morissette, the Beatles.

Words of wisdom: “Live large.”

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