

MEMO

TO: Ald. Paul A. Henningsen

FROM: Jim Owczarski, Legislative Research Analyst

DATE: June 13, 2002

RE: Permitting private ambulance companies to convey and bill for Advanced Life Support services

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The following is in response to your request for a substitute ordinance draft permitting the City" licensed private ambulance companies to convey and bill for Advanced Life Support (ALS) services. Although the rates for ambulance conveyance are established by the code (s. 75-15-14) the determination of which agencies may make which sorts of conveyances is left to the Ambulance Service Board pursuant to s. 75-15-2-b-2 (copy attached). As you can see, the implementation and amendment of the Emergency Medical Services System's *Handbook of Operations* is left to the "sole judgment and discretion of the board."

Attached, please find a copy of the relevant section of the *Handbook* in which ALS conveyances are left to the publicly-operated paramedic units. **Inserting an ALS rate into the code would therefore be insufficient to permit private ambulance companies to convey and bill for ALS services. Such a change would require an amendment of the *Handbook* by the Ambulance Service Board.**

Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. I am at extension x2299.

## 75-15-2 Miscellaneous Health Provisions

f. "Central dispatch" means a process that includes the reception and processing of all calls for emergency medical assistance as a single communications center. The fire department is the single communications center.

h. "City-wide emergency medical service system" means a system composed of fire department personnel and equipment, and private sector personnel and equipment for the purpose of providing advance and basic life support conveyances within city limits.

i. "Committee" means the committee designated by the common council as responsible for ambulance service regulations.

j. "Emergency medical services" (EMS) means those services which are required as a result of an unforeseen attack of illness or an injury. These include rescue, ambulance, emergency department, communications and public education services.

k. "Emergency medical technician" (EMT) means a person responsible for the administration of emergency care procedures or proper handling or transporting of the sick or disabled, who has successfully passed a course of EMT instruction sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, public health service, or its equivalent (sometimes referred to as "basic" (EMT).

l. "Fire department" means the city of Milwaukee fire department.

m. "Private sector" means any person, firm, partnership or corporation within the city providing ambulance services on a fee-for-service basis.

n. "Provider" means private sector participating within the city-wide emergency medical services system.

o. "Service area" means a geographically defined area within the city assigned in accordance with sub. 13.

p. "Support status" means a status whereby a certified provider, in lieu of being assigned a service area, receives dispatch calls to which the designated provider within the assigned service area cannot promptly respond. If more than one certified provider is given support status, the common council, upon the advice of the board and the recommendation of the committee, shall determine the manner in which such calls are to be distributed.

## 2. AMBULANCE SERVICE BOARD.

a. Establishment. An ambulance service board is established consisting of the chair of the public safety committee of the common council, who shall serve as chair, the commissioner of health, the chief of the fire department, the medical director of the Milwaukee County paramedical program, a designee of the Emergency Medical Services committee of the Medical Society of Milwaukee County, a designee of the Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association and a public member representing the interests of citizens who shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the common council. The public member shall be appointed by the mayor within 60 days after commencement of a new common council term or within 60 days after a vacancy in the board position occurs, whichever is later.

b. Duties. b-1. The board shall advise the committee on all matters pertaining to issuance, renewal, suspension, revocation and reinstatement of certificates, and shall, consistent with sub. 13, assist in the development of service plans.

b-2. The board may develop appropriate rules, regulations and procedures as required from time to time for the safe operation of the emergency medical service system, subject to approval by the common council. The board is also authorized to develop, implement and amend as necessary in the sole judgment and discretion of the board a handbook of operations for the system.

3. CERTIFICATION. No person or provider shall within the city act as a city-wide emergency medical service system provider without first having obtained a certificate as provided under this section. This section applies only to providers supplying emergency services on a city-wide dispatched basis.

4. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION AND SERVICE AREA. a. Application for certificates under this section shall be filed with the health department on forms approved by the license committee. The board and the committee are authorized to require sufficient information to determine the qualifications of the applicant to engage in the business of providing basic and advance life support system

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Mott Law

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE  
**EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL  
SERVICES  
SYSTEM**

Handbook of  
Operations

PUBLICATION DATE  
NOVEMBER, 1987

- J. Clean all glass
- K. Make visual safety inspection of vehicle, such as belts, shocks, springs, steering parts, etc.

4. All ambulance vehicles serving the EMS System must be recorded by providing description and vehicle identification number to the City. Participating ambulance services are required to maintain this record current.

#### Private Ambulance Dispatching

1. Basic Life Support conveyances shall be made by the certified private ambulance services and the Milwaukee Fire Department Rescue Squads.
2. Advanced Life Support conveyances or potentially immediate life-threatening emergencies are to be made by the paramedic units.
3. Paramedic units may evaluate and triage patients to Basic Life Support Services.
4. Basic Life Support unit may request assistance from a paramedic unit.
5. Basic Life Support unit must request a paramedic unit in the following patient situations:
  - a. Unresponsive and unconscious
  - b. Systolic blood pressure less than 90
  - c. Pulse or heart rate less than 40 or more than 200
  - d. Severe respiratory distress
  - e. Overdose of tricyclic drugs (i.e., antidepressants)
6. Fire Department ambulance requests will be handled on a priority basis without exception.
7. Fire Department ambulance requests are dispatched as emergency calls unless specifically designated otherwise. The ambulance is required to arrive at the scene within six minutes of receiving the call.
8. Private ambulance dispatchers shall be familiar with the EMS System policies and procedures, the boundaries of the ambulance service areas, the current ambulance service plan, and shall follow the established dispatch protocol provided by the Milwaukee Fire Department.
9. Private ambulance services, upon receiving a Fire Department ambulance request within their service area, shall dispatch an ambulance within one minute, or refer the request to the designated certified ambulance service in back-up status. When this occurs, the Fire Department central dispatch must be notified of the change of responding provider.