

Policy Title: EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHER**No. D - 7****Board approval:** 5/05**Effective:** 7/1/10**Supersedes:** 7/1/05**Page:** 1 of 5**Reference:** EMS Rules Section 515.710 Emergency Medical Dispatcher (April 25, 2003)

- I. **Definitions** (National Association of EMS Physicians, 1989)
 - A. **Emergency Medical Dispatching:** The reception and management of requests for emergency medical assistance in an EMS system
 - B. **Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD):** A specially trained public safety telecommunicator with the specific emergency medical knowledge essential for the appropriate and efficient functioning of emergency medical dispatching.
 - C. **Medical Dispatch Center:** Any agency that routinely accepts calls for EMD assistance from the public and/or that dispatches prehospital emergency medical personnel pursuant to such requests.
 - D. **Medical direction:** The management and accountability for the medical care aspects of an EMD program including: 1) the direction and oversight of the training of the EMD; 2) development and monitoring of both the operational and the emergency medical priority dispatch protocol systems; 3) participation in EMD system evaluation; and 4) directing the medical care rendered by the EMDs
 - E. **Medical Priority Dispatch System:** A medically approved system used by a medical dispatch center to dispatch appropriate aid to medical emergencies, which include 1) systematized caller interrogation; 2) systematized Pre-Arrival Instructions; and 3) protocols which match the dispatcher's evaluation of the injury or illness type and severity with vehicle response mode and configuration.
 - F. **Prearrival instructions:** Telephone-rendered, medically approved written instructions given by trained EMDs to callers which help to provide aid to the victim and control of the situation prior to arrival of prehospital personnel;
 - G. **Dispatch life support:** The knowledge, procedures, and skills used by trained EMDs in providing care through Pre-Arrival Instructions to callers. It consists of those BLS and ALS principles that are appropriate to application by medical dispatchers.
- II. All Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) must be certified with IDPH by February 1, 2003.
- III. **To apply for certification as an EMD, the individual must submit the following to their EMS System who shall process the request with IDPH:**
 - A. Signed Child Support Form that includes name, address, employer; date of birth, social security number, driver's license number, and
 - B. Documentation of successful completion of a training course in emergency medical dispatch meeting or exceeding the National Standard Curriculum of the United States Department of Transportation for EMS Dispatchers or its equivalent (Section 3.70(a) of the Act). Courses approved in Illinois include Medical Priority (Clawson), Powerphone and APCO. The NWC EMSS Chiefs prefer Medical Priority, but there is currently no requirement to mandate only one course in the NWC EMSS.
- IV. An individual who is registered as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher on February 1, 2003, and meets the qualifications of the EMS Rules shall be certified as an EMD.
- V. Reciprocity shall be granted to an individual who is certified as an EMD in another state and who meets the requirements of the Illinois Rules.
- VI. An individual who is certified or recertified by a national certification agency shall be certified as an EMD if he/she meets the requirements of the Illinois Rules.

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- VII. The certification is valid for a period of 4 years.
- VIII. A certified EMD shall notify the Resource Hospital EMS Office within 30 days after any changes in name, address or employer. The Resource Hospital will provide that change to IDPH. Notification may be in person or by mail, phone, fax, or electronic mail.
- IX. A person may not represent himself or herself, nor may an agency or business represent an agent or employee of that agency or business as an EMD unless certified by IDPH as an EMD (Section 3.70(b)(11) of the Act).
- X. **EMD Protocols**
- A. Each EMD agency shall have in place IDPH and System-approved policies and procedures for the safe and effective use of their approved EMD priority reference system (EMDPRS).
 - B. The EMD shall use the IDPH-approved EMSPRS protocol selected for use by his/her agency and approved by the EMS MD. Prearrival support instructions shall be provided in a non-discriminatory manner and shall be provided in accordance with the EMDPRS established by the EMS MD of the EMS System in which the EMD operates (Section 3.70(a) of the Act).
 - C. Any EMDPRS approved by the IDPH and the EMS MD, including its questions, instructions, codes, and protocols, shall be used as a whole rather than selective parts in isolation. Each EMD shall provide dispatch life support (including pre-arrival instructions) in compliance to the written text or scripts and other processes within the approved EMDPRS.
 - D. **EMD Protocols shall include:**
 1. Complaint-related question sets that query the caller in a standardized manner. The NWC EMS MD has authorized EMDs to dispatch an ambulance after the first three (of six) case entry questions have been answered. The remainder of the questions and post-dispatch questions can be completed after the ambulance is dispatched;
 2. Prearrival instructions associated with all question sets.
 3. Dispatch determinants consistent with the design and configuration of the EMS System and the severity of the event as determined by the question sets; and
 4. Post-dispatch instructions with all question sets
 5. Dispatchers shall make all reasonable efforts to advise the person making the request for an ambulance of the estimated time of arrival of the ambulance if requested (Former provision of Policy D-6).
 - E. If the dispatcher operates under the authority of an Emergency Telephone System Board established under the Emergency Telephone System Act, the protocols shall be established by the Board in consultation with the EMS MD (Section 3.70(a) of the Act).
 - F. Dispatch centers must submit copies of their printed prearrival instructions to the EMS MD for approval. IDPH and the EMS MD shall approve EMDPRS protocols that meet or exceed the requirements of subsection (b)(2) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Emergency Medical Dispatch: National Standard Curriculum (1996); available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15250-7954.

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- A. IDPH-approved EMD training programs shall be conducted in accordance with the standards of the NHTSA Emergency Medical Dispatch: National Standard Curriculum or equivalent (Section 3.70(b)(9) of the Act).
- B. Applications for approval of EMD training programs shall be filed with IDPH on forms prescribed by IDPH. The application shall contain, at a minimum, the name of the applicant, agency and address, type of training program, lead instructor's name and address, and dates of the training program.
- C. Applications for approval, including a copy of the class schedule and course syllabus, shall be submitted at least 60 days in advance of the first scheduled class. A description of the textbook being used and passing score for the class shall be included with the application.
- D. All education, training, and continuing education courses for EMDs shall be coordinated by at least one approved EMS Lead Instructor (Section 3.65(b)(5) of the Act), who shall be responsible for the overall management of the training program and shall be approved by IDPH based on the requirements of Section 515.700 of the EMS Rules.
- E. EMS training programs shall be conducted by instructors licensed by IDPH as an EMT-B, EMT-I or EMT-P who:
 - 1. are, at a minimum, certified emergency medical dispatchers;
 - 2. have completed a Department-approved course on methods of instruction;
 - 3. have previous experience in a medical dispatch agency; and
 - 4. have demonstrated experience as an EMS instructor (Section 3.70(b)(14) of the Act).
- F. Any change in the EMD training program's EMS Lead Instructor shall require that an amendment to the application be filed with IDPH.
- G. Questions for all quizzes and tests to be given during the EMD training program shall be prepared by the EMS Lead Instructor and available for review by IDPH upon IDPH's request.
- H. All approved programs shall maintain class and student records for seven years, which shall be made available to IDPH for review upon request.

XII. EMS Recertification

- A. To apply for recertification, the EMD shall submit the following to their affiliated Resource Hospital at least 30 days prior to the certification expiration date:
 - 1. Signed child support statement;
 - 2. Proof of completion of at least 12 hours annually of medical dispatch continuing education (Section 3.70(b)(7) of the Act).
- B. An EMD who has not been recommended for recertification by the EMS MD shall independently submit to IDPH an application for recertification. The EMS MD shall provide the EMD with a copy of the application form to be completed.

XIII. Emergency Medical Dispatch Agency Certification

- A. To apply for certification as an EMD Agency, the person, organization or government agency that operates an EMD Agency shall submit the following to IDPH:
 - 1. A completed EMD Agency certification form that includes name and address;

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2. Documentation of the use on every request for medical assistance of an emergency medical dispatch priority reference system (EMDPRS) that complies with the EMS Rules and is approved by the EMS MD (Section 3.70(b)(10) of the Act); and
3. Documentation of the establishment of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) program under the approval and supervision of the EMS MD (Section 3.70(b)(10) of the Act). The CQI program shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. A quality assistance review process used by the EMD agency to identify EMD compliance with the protocol
 - b. Random case review of a minimum of 10 EMS calls per week or 3% of the total EMS call volume, whichever is greater. The EMD Agency must provide to the EMS MD documentation of the quality assurance case review process used by the EMD agency to identify EMD compliance to the EMDPRS.
 - c. Regular feedback of performance results to all EMDs on at least a quarterly basis;
 - d. Establishment of EMD performance scoring standards defined within the following areas contained in the EMDPRS:
 - (1) Address, phone number, consciousness, breathing verification
 - (2) Chief complaint/incident type selection
 - (3) Systematized interrogation questions
 - (4) Post-dispatch instructions
 - (5) Pre-arrival instructions
 - (6) Dispatch code selection
 - (7) Overall or aggregate performance score
 - e. Establishment of minimum performance levels for each EMD performance scoring standard defined in Section (d) above.
 - f. Establishment of a record-keeping system, including report forms or a computer-based data management system, to permit storage and subsequent evaluation of case records to ensure EMD compliance with the EMDPRS, evaluation of protocol effectiveness, and timeliness of interrogation questions and dispatch functions. The database or recordkeeping system must, at a minimum, be capable of storing compliance scores for each performance area defined in Section (d).
 - g. Availability of CQI reports to IDPH and the EMS System upon request. The System recommends that scores shall be kept for individual EMDs and the EMD agency cumulatively. Cumulative scores for the EMS agency shall be submitted to the EMS System as requested.
 - h. Compliance with the confidentiality provisions of the Medical Studies Act [735 ILCS 5/8-2101] and HIPAA.

XIV. **Emergency Medical Dispatch Agency Recertification**

- A. To apply for recertification, the EMD Agency shall submit an application to IDPH, on a form prescribed by IDPH, at least 30 days prior to the certification expiration date.
- B. The application shall document continued compliance with the EMS rules

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XV. **Revocation or suspension of EMD or EMD Agency certification**

- A. The EMS MD shall report to IDPH whenever an action has taken place that may require the revocation or suspension of a certificate issued by IDPH (Section 3.70(b)(4) of the Act).
- B. Revocation or suspension of the EMD or EMD Agency certification shall be in accordance with EMS Rules and System policy.

XVI. **Waiver of EMD Requirements**

- A. IDPH may modify or waive EMD requirements based on:
 - 1. The scope and frequency of dispatch activities and the dispatcher's access to training; or
 - 2. Whether the previously attended dispatcher training program merits automatic recertification for the dispatcher (Section 3.70(b)(15) of the Act).
- B. The following individuals are exempt from the requirements of the EMD section of the Illinois Rules:
 - 1. Public safety dispatchers who only transfer calls to another answering point that is responsible for dispatching of fire and/or EMS personnel;
 - 2. Dispatchers for volunteer or rural ambulance companies providing only one level of care, whose dispatchers are employed by the ambulance service and are not performing call triage, answering 911 calls or providing pre-arrival instructions.

XVII. **EMD oversight** in the NWC EMSS shall be conducted by an Emergency Medical Dispatch Committee that shall meet at least quarterly and operate under the provisions of their charter.

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