

STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

RESPONSE AND TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY MEDICAL VEHICLES (INCLUDING LIGHTS AND SIREN USE)

Due to the inherent risk of operating with lights and siren, Department of Public Health Authorized Emergency Medical Vehicles (AEMV), (specifically ambulances and EMS non-transport vehicles) should use emergency lights and siren only when responding to calls involving or transporting patients believed to need immediate life or limb threatening medical intervention. The mode of transport is a patient care medical decision.

Preparation

EMS personnel must use patient compartment vehicle occupant restraints whenever practical based upon patient critical needs. EMS personnel must use occupant restraints when driving. Front seat and patient compartment passengers/patients must use occupant restraints. EMS employers must ensure that EMS personnel who operate AEMVs are qualified and trained appropriately. Consideration should be given to the use of electronic behavior modifying instant feedback systems as a skills improvement and coaching tool.

The Department of Public Health should strongly encourage and financially support;

1. Emergency Vehicle Operators Training for all EMS Providers and,
2. The use of vehicle monitoring systems that encourage coaching and provide operators with immediate driving technique feedback and organizations with data for system improvement.

System Status

Connecticut Statute 14-283 must be adhered to.

Patient Response

Authorized Emergency Medical Vehicles should respond lights and siren only when directed by their dispatch center based on EMD criteria. Should additional information be received from public safety personnel suggesting that a response no longer merits a lights and siren mode while the AEMV is en route to the scene, the AEMV response should be downgraded to non-lights and siren mode. Similarly, should additional information be received from public safety personnel suggesting that a non lights and siren response merits a lights and siren mode while the AEMV is en route to the scene, the response should be upgraded to a lights and siren mode.

Patient Transport

The highest level certified/licensed EMS provider responsible for the patient's care will advise the driver of the appropriate mode of transportation based upon the medical condition of the patient.

When transporting the patient utilizing lights and sirens, the need for immediate medical intervention should be beyond the capabilities of the ambulance crew using available supplies and equipment and be documented on the patient care report.

The mode of transport for emergency **interfacility transfers** should be based upon the directions of the referring physician and on the condition of the patient unless the patient's condition has deteriorated en route.

Exceptions to these policies can be made under extraordinary circumstances.

Appendix A

Sec. 14-283. Rights of emergency vehicles. Obstruction of. (a) "Emergency vehicle", as used in this section, means any ambulance or vehicle operated by a member of an emergency medical service organization responding to an emergency call, any vehicle used by a fire department or by any officer of a fire department while on the way to a fire or while responding to an emergency call but not while returning from a fire or emergency call, any state or local police vehicle operated by a police officer or inspector of the Department of Motor Vehicles answering an emergency call or in the pursuit of fleeing law violators or any Department of Correction vehicle operated by a Department of Correction officer while in the course of such officer's employment and while responding to an emergency call.

(b) The operator of any emergency vehicle may (1) park or stand such vehicle, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter, (2) proceed past any red light or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down or stopping to the extent necessary for the safe operation of such vehicle, (3) exceed the posted speed limits or other speed limits imposed by or pursuant to section 14-218a or 14-219 as long as such operator does not endanger life or property by so doing, and (4) disregard statutes, ordinances or regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specific directions.

(c) The exemptions herein granted shall apply only when an emergency vehicle is making use of an audible warning signal device, including but not limited to a siren, whistle or bell which meets the requirements of subsection (f) of section 14-80, and visible flashing or revolving lights which meet the requirements of sections 14-96p and 14-96q, and to any state or local police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible warning signal device only.

(d) The provisions of this section shall not relieve the operator of an emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property.

(e) Upon the immediate approach of an emergency vehicle making use of such an audible warning signal device and such visible flashing or revolving lights or of any state or local police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible warning signal device only, the operator of every other vehicle in the immediate vicinity shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a state or local police officer or a firefighter.

(f) Any officer of a fire department may remove, or cause to be removed, any vehicle upon any public or private way which obstructs or retards any fire department, or any officer thereof, in controlling or extinguishing any fire.

(g) Any person who wilfully or negligently obstructs or retards any ambulance or vehicle operated by a member of an emergency medical service organization while answering any emergency call or taking a patient to a hospital, or any vehicle used by a fire department or any officer or member of a fire department while on the way to a fire, or while responding to an emergency call, or any vehicle used by the state police or any local police department, or any officer of the Division of State Police within the Department of Public Safety or any local police department while on the way to an emergency call or in the pursuit of fleeing law violators, shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than seven days, or both.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed as permitting the use of a siren upon any motor vehicle other than an emergency vehicle, as defined in subsection (a) of this section, or a rescue service vehicle which is registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles pursuant to section 19a-181.

(i) A police officer may issue a written warning or a summons to the owner of a vehicle based upon an affidavit signed by the operator of an emergency vehicle specifying (1) the license plate number, color and type of any vehicle observed violating any provision of subsection (e) or (g) of this section, and (2) the date, approximate time and location of such violation.

Approved CEMSMAC 5/07

Approved with modifications CT EMS Advisory Board 6/13/07

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