



July 31, 2013

Alberta Fire Chiefs Association
P.O. Box 38
Wabamun, AB T0E 2K0

Attention: Bill Purdy – Executive Director

Dear Mr. Purdy:

Re: Request for Clarification of Fire Fighter Requirements for Driving AHS Ambulances

Thank you for an opportunity to provide clarification on Alberta firefighters driving Alberta Health Services (AHS) ambulances. I trust the information below clarifies the requirements and authorizations for firefighters when requested by AHS EMS to operate ambulances. As a result of a meeting with AHS on July 12, 2013 I understand the AFCA is seeking clarity on three specific areas.

1. Vehicle Insurance Requirements/Coverage for Firefighters Operating an AHS EMS Ambulance.

When a fire fighter who is not an AHS employee is authorized by an AHS employee to operate an AHS EMS vehicle, AHS' vehicle insurance policy is valid for the person who is requested / authorized to operate the vehicle. The individual is considered authorized to operate the ambulance when any AHS employee requests them to do so.

2. Confirmation of Licensure Requirements for Firefighters Who Drive an Ambulance.

Alberta Transportation regulations stipulate that the driver of an ambulance must possess a valid Class 1, 2 or 4 licence. The AHS EMS Operating Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Vehicles Policy # PS-EMS-01 also makes the same stipulation. When an AHS EMS employee requests a firefighter to drive an ambulance, the firefighter assigned to fulfill the request must have the required licensure. Further, it is the responsibility of each individual to ensure they have the necessary qualifications to perform any task requested of them by AHS EMS personnel. It is recommended that firefighters identify if they are not licensed at the appropriate level if requested by an AHS EMS employee to drive an ambulance.

3. Clarification of Reference to Extenuating Circumstances in Section 3.1(b) of the Operating EMS Vehicles Policy.

Within this section of the policy, extenuating circumstances is specific to the use of emergency warning devices. It permits EMS staff to use their best judgment and provide permission for a non-EMS person with the correct class of driver license, to drive an ambulance using the emergency warning devices. This has mainly been reserved for use in situations such as, critical patients, large scale events or mass casualty incidents. The reference to extenuating circumstances does not permit any person to drive an ambulance without the correct class of license required by provincial regulations.

Firefighters are a valuable allied agency in the provision of emergency services; however, AHS understands the decision to provide firefighters to drive ambulances when requested is at the discretion of each fire department. We encourage fire departments to continue to work closely with local EMS leadership teams to communicate each fire department's desire and ability to participate when requested.

A copy of the entire policy is attached for your reference; please feel free to contact me should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Plato
Provincial Director, EMS Fleet

cc: EMS Provincial Leadership Team