

**NFPA<sup>®</sup>**

**450**

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**Guide for Emergency Medical  
Services and Systems**

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**2017**



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## **NFPA®450**

### **Guide for**

## **Emergency Medical Services and Systems**

### **2017 Edition**

This edition of NFPA 450, *Guide for Emergency Medical Services and Systems*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Emergency Medical Services. It was issued by the Standards Council on May 13, 2016, with an effective date of June 2, 2016, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 450 was approved as an American National Standard on June 2, 2016.

### **Origin and Development of NFPA 450**

In January 1999, the NFPA Standards Council considered NFPA's role in Emergency Medical Services (EMS). After a review of extensive information submitted on the need for such a project, the council voted to create a new EMS project to address EMS-related topics not covered by other existing NFPA projects. A forum on EMS was scheduled at the May 1999 Association meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. In June 1999, NFPA held a focus group meeting to further discuss NFPA's role in EMS. A request for persons interested in being members of this new project was sent out, and a Technical Committee was formed. The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Tampa, Florida, to discuss what specific projects the Technical Committee wanted to address. The first edition of NFPA 450, *Guide for Emergency Medical Services and Systems*, was issued in 2004 to assist individuals, agencies, organizations, or systems, as well as those interested or involved in emergency medical services system design, by providing EMS guidelines and recommendations.

For the 2009 edition, the Technical Committee reviewed and revised a number of definitions in Chapter 3 and added new definitions for new material in Chapter 5. The committee also revised material in Section 5.6, Essential System Analysis Components. The table from Annex B was modified and moved to Chapter 5, and Annex B was deleted.

For the 2013 edition, the committee went through and updated the referenced publications to ensure that they were still relevant or pertinent to the document. The intent was to bring the document in line or ensure correlation with many of the nationally published EMS documents in use. Some changes were also made to clarify commonly used terms that initially might have been presented with some confusion or misuse.

For the 2017 edition, the Technical Committee updated several of the references throughout the document and addressed the many changes in the delivery of healthcare services as a result of the Affordable Care Act. Special attention was also made to include mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine, growing areas in the delivery of emergency medical services.

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**Committee Scope:** This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents relating to emergency medical services, except those documents covered by other existing NFPA committees.

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NFPA 450

Guide for

Emergency Medical Services and Systems

2017 Edition

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**NOTICE:** An asterisk (\*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates that explanatory material on the paragraph can be found in Annex A.

A reference in brackets [ ] following a section or paragraph indicates material that has been extracted from another NFPA document. As an aid to the user, the complete title and edition of the source documents for extracts in mandatory sections of the document are given in Chapter 2 and those for extracts in informational sections are given in Annex B. Extracted text may be edited for consistency and style and may include the revision of internal paragraph references and other references as appropriate. Requests for interpretations or revisions of extracted text shall be sent to the technical committee responsible for the source document.

Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex B.

Chapter 1 Administration

**1.1 Scope.** This document is designed to assist individuals, agencies, organizations, or systems as well as those interested or involved in emergency medical services (EMS) system design.

**1.2 Purpose.** The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines, resources, and recommendations to assist those interested or involved in EMS system design. Provision of development and/or pre-hospital care requires the coordination and cooperation of disparate elements. This document also provides a framework for designing and/or evaluating a comprehensive EMS system. The foundation of this document is based on multiple references, including the *EMS Agenda for the Future*.

Chapter 2 Referenced Publications

**2.1 General.** The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this guide and should be considered part of the recommendations of this document.

**2.2 NFPA Publications.** National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 1071, *Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician Professional Qualifications*, 2016 edition.

NFPA 1221, *Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*, 2016 edition.

NFPA 1451, *Standard for a Fire and Emergency Service Vehicle Operations Training Program*, 2013 edition.

NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, 2014 edition.

NFPA 1581, *Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program*, 2015 edition.

NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2016 edition.

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2014 edition.

NFPA 1917, *Standard for Automotive Ambulances*, 2016 edition.

NFPA 1999, *Standard on Protective Clothing for Emergency Medical Operations*, 2013 edition.

2.3 Other Publications.

**2.3.1 FEMA Publications.** Federal Emergency Management Agency, 500 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20402.

*Civil Preparedness Guide (CPG)*, 1992.

*National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)*, 2011.

**2.3.2 NEMSIS Publications.** P.O. Box 581289, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1289.

NEMSIS National Elements Subsets, 2014.

**2.3.3 NHTSA Publications.** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

Delbridge, T. R., et al., *Emergency Medical Services: Agenda for the Future*. August 1996. DOT HS 808-441, NTS-42.

*Emergency Medical Services Performance Measures: Recommended Attributes and Indicators for System and Service Performance*. Dec. 2009.

**2.3.4 NIH Publications.** National Institutes of Health, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20892.

Pub. No. 93-3304, *Staffing and Equipping EMS Systems: Rapid Identification and Treatment of Acute Myocardial Infarction*, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, September 1993.

**2.3.5 U.S. Government Publications.** U.S. Government Publications. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402.

Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1910.1030, *Blood-borne Pathogens*.



### 2.3.6 Other Publications.

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA, 2003.

### 2.4 References for Extracts in Advisory Sections.

NFPA 79, *Electrical Standard for Industrial Machinery*, 2015 edition.

NFPA 402, *Guide for Aircraft Rescue and Fire-Fighting Operations*, 2013 edition.

NFPA 901, *Standard Classifications for Incident Reporting and Fire Protection Data*, 2016 edition.

NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program*, 2013 edition.

NFPA 1521, *Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer Professional Qualifications*, 2015 edition.

NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, 2014 edition.

NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2016 edition.

## Chapter 3 Definitions

**3.1 General.** The definitions contained in this chapter apply to the terms used in this guide. Where terms are not defined in this chapter or within another chapter, they should be defined using their ordinarily accepted meanings within the context in which they are used. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, is the source for the ordinarily accepted meaning.

### 3.2 NFPA Official Definitions.

**3.2.1\* Approved.** Acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

**3.2.2\* Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).** An organization, office, or individual responsible for enforcing the requirements of a code or standard, or for approving equipment, materials, an installation, or a procedure.

**3.2.3 Guide.** A document that is advisory or informative in nature and that contains only nonmandatory provisions. A guide may contain mandatory statements such as when a guide can be used, but the document as a whole is not suitable for adoption into law.

**3.2.4 Should.** Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

**3.2.5 Standard.** An NFPA Standard, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and that is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard and shall be located in an appendix, annex, footnote, informational note, or other means as permitted in the NFPA Manuals of Style. When used in a generic sense, such as in the phrase "standards development process" or "standards development activities," the term "standards" includes all NFPA Standards, including Codes, Standards, Recommended Practices, and Guides.

### 3.3 General Definitions.

**3.3.1 Address.** A number or other code and the street name identifying a location.

**3.3.2 Alarm.** A signal or message from a person or device indicating the existence of an emergency or other situation that requires immediate action.

**3.3.3 Ambulance.** A vehicle designed, equipped, and operated for the treatment and transport of ill and injured persons.

**3.3.4 Ambulance Service.** An organization that exists to provide patient transportation by ambulance.

**3.3.5 American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).** A national organization of emergency medical physicians.

**3.3.6 Arrival.** The point at which a vehicle is stopped on the scene of a response destination or address.

**3.3.7 Arrived at Destination.** The time that the responding unit arrived at the hospital or transfer point.

**3.3.8 Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL).** A computerized mapping system used to track the location of vehicles.

**3.3.9 Available for Service.** The time the unit was available for response.

**3.3.10 Bloodborne Pathogens.** Microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause diseases in humans.

**3.3.11 Call.** A request for assistance to which equipment and personnel are deployed.

**3.3.12 Call for Help.** The time that a third party or the patient first attempts to contact outside assistance.

**3.3.13 Call Intake.** The procedure for answering the phone or other device that is used to receive a signal or message from a person or device indicating the need for medical assistance, learning the nature of the emergency, and verifying the address of the emergency.

**3.3.14 Call Processing.** The interval from call intake by the unit-dispatching agency to the time of unit notification, including answering the phone (alarm), gathering vital information, and initiating a response by dispatching the appropriate unit(s).

**3.3.15\* Chain of Survival.** A metaphor to communicate the interdependence of a community's emergency response to cardiac arrest.

**3.3.16 Compliance.** Adherence or conformance to laws, regulations, and standards.

**3.3.17 Cross-Trained/Dual Role (CT/DR).** An emergency service that allows personnel trained in two service functions, such as fire suppression and emergency medical care, to function in either role.

**3.3.18 Defibrillation.** The delivery of an electrical shock to the heart intended to reverse abnormal electrical activity.

### 3.3.19 Defibrillator.

**3.3.19.1 Automated External Defibrillator (AED).** A device that administers an electric shock through the chest wall to the heart using built-in computers to assess the patient's heart rhythm and defibrillate as needed.

**3.3.19.2 Manual Defibrillator.** A device that delivers an electric shock through the chest wall to the heart and that requires operation by trained medical personnel.

**3.3.20 Deployment.** The procedures by which resources are distributed throughout the service area.

**3.3.21 Dispatch.** To send out emergency response resources promptly to an address or incident location for a specific purpose.

**3.3.21.1 Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD).** A dispatching method or process in which a computer and its associated terminal(s) are used to provide relative dispatch data to the concerned telecommunicator.

**3.3.21.2 Emergency Medical Dispatch.** The receipt and management of requests for emergency medical assistance in the emergency medical services (EMS) system.

**3.3.22 Dispatch Time.** The time the responding unit was notified by the telecommunicator.

**3.3.23 Documentation.** The process of gathering, classifying, and storing information.

**3.3.24 Emergency.** A condition or situation in which an individual perceives a need for immediate response.

**3.3.25 Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD).** EMS personnel specifically trained and certified in interviewing techniques, pre-arrival instructions, and call prioritization.

**3.3.26 Emergency Medical Services (EMS).** Providing patient services that might include the provision of assessment, treatment such as first aid, CPR, BLS, ALS, and other pre-hospital procedures, including ambulance transportation of patients.

**3.3.27 Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMS-C).** A national initiative to reduce child and youth disability and death from severe illness or injury.

**3.3.28 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).** A term for any pre-hospital provider trained and certified at the EMT-Basic level or higher.

**3.3.28.1 Emergency Medical Technician — Basic (EMT-B).** A pre-hospital basic life support (BLS) provider with training based on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Standard Curriculum.

**3.3.28.2 Emergency Medical Technician — Intermediate (EMT-I).** A pre-hospital provider trained according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Standard Curriculum to intermediate levels.

**3.3.28.3 Emergency Medical Technician — Paramedic (EMT-P).** A pre-hospital provider trained according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) National Standard Curriculum to advanced levels.

**3.3.29 Emergency Operations.** Activities of the emergency responders relating to rescue, fire suppression, emergency medical care, and special operations.

**3.3.30 Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** An EAP is an employer-sponsored service designed for personal or family problems, including mental health, substance abuse, various addictions, marital problems, parenting problems, emotional problems, or financial or legal concerns.

**3.3.31 Employee Illness and Injury.** A work-related illness or injury requiring evaluation or medical follow-up.

**3.3.32 Employee Turnover.** Termination of employment with the organization for any reason.

**3.3.33 Fire Suppression.** The activities involved in controlling and extinguishing fires. [1500, 2013]

**3.3.34 First Intervention Time.** The time that the first intervention, such as an IV, defibrillation, CPR, extrication, and so on, is begun.

**3.3.35 First PSAP Call Time.** The time the telephone begins to ring in the first public safety answering point (or other designated entity).

**3.3.36 First Responder (EMS).** Functional provision of initial assessment (i.e., airway, breathing, and circulatory systems) and basic first-aid intervention, including CPR and automatic external defibrillator (AED) capability. [1710, 2016]

**3.3.37 GSA KKK Specifications.** A set of federal specifications relating to purchasing requirements for ambulance design and manufacture.

**3.3.38 Hazard.** A source of possible injury or damage to health. [79, 2015]

**3.3.39 Hazardous Material.** A substance that presents an unusual danger to persons due to toxicity, chemical reactivity, decomposition, corrosiveness, explosion or detonation, etiological hazards, or similar properties.

**3.3.40 Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA).** The former name of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

**3.3.41 Health Maintenance Organization (HMO).** An organized system of health care that provides or arranges for a range of basic and supplemental health care services to a voluntarily enrolled group of persons under a prepayment plan.

**3.3.42 Incident Location.** The address or other identifiable area of an event.

**3.3.43 Incident Management System.** A system that defines the roles and responsibilities to be assumed by responders and the standard operating procedures to be used in the management and direction of emergency incidents and other functions. [1561, 2014]

**3.3.44 Incident or Onset Time.** The time the incident occurred or the time that the symptoms developed.

**3.3.45 In-Service Utilization Ratio.** An efficiency ratio that divides the cumulative unit-elapsed intervals by the total time that the unit is on duty.

**3.3.46 Interval.**

**3.3.46.1 Fractile Response Interval.** A method of describing response intervals that uses frequency distribution as its basis for reporting.

**3.3.46.2\* Turnout Interval.** The time beginning when units acknowledge notification of the emergency to the beginning point of response time.

**3.3.47 Interview Ends.** The time that the PSAP telecommunicator completes the interview with the caller. This time stamp can occur before or after resources are identified, or before or after units arrive on the scene.

**3.3.48 Lead Agency.** An organization assigned to organize the interagency oversight of the day-to-day conduct of policy related to a particular operation.

**3.3.49 Life Support.**

**3.3.49.1 Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).** A nationally recognized curriculum to teach advanced methods of treatment for cardiac and other emergencies.

**3.3.49.2 Advanced Life Support (ALS).** Emergency medical treatment beyond basic life support level as defined by the medical authority having jurisdiction. [1500, 2013]

**3.3.49.3 Basic Life Support (BLS).** Emergency medical treatment at a level as defined by the medical authority having jurisdiction. [1500, 2013]

**3.3.50 Management.**

**3.3.50.1 Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).** A program designed to reduce acute and chronic effects of stress related to job functions.

**3.3.50.2 Total Quality Management (TQM).** A management system fostering continuously improving performance at every level of function and focusing on customer satisfaction.

**3.3.51 Medical Direction.** The granting of authority to an EMS system or agency and its providers in the delivery and improvement of EMS pre-hospital care.

**3.3.51.1\* Off-Line (Indirect) Medical Direction.** The medical direction that consists of standing orders, training, protocol development, and supervision that are authorized by the medical director.

**3.3.51.2\* On-Line (Direct) Medical Direction.** The medical direction provided to out-of-hospital providers by the medical director or designee, generally in an emergency situation, either on-scene or by real-time communication.

**3.3.52\* Medical Director.** A physician trained in emergency medicine, designated as a medical director for the local EMS agency.

**3.3.53\* Medical Oversight.** The supervision and administration of the medical aspects of an EMS system or agency and its providers.

**3.3.54 Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH).** The provision of healthcare using patient-centered, mobile resources in the out-of-hospital environment, including, but not limited to, services such as providing telephone advice to 9-1-1 callers instead of resource dispatch; providing community paramedicine care, chronic disease management, preventive care, or post-discharge follow-up visits; or transport or referral to a broad spectrum of appropriate care not limited to hospital emergency departments.

**3.3.55 Multiple Casualty.** Injury or death of more than one individual in an incident.

**3.3.56 Mutual Aid.** Reciprocal assistance by emergency services under a prearranged plan. [402, 2013]

**3.3.57 National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP).** A national organization of emergency medical physicians and other professionals.

**3.3.58\* National EMS Information Systems (NEMSIS).** The national repository that will be used to potentially store EMS data from every state in the nation.

**3.3.59 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).** The agency under the Department of Transportation that is responsible for preventing motor vehicle injuries.

**3.3.60 National Institutes of Health (NIH).** An agency of the Public Health Service of the Department of Health and Human Services, responsible for promoting the nation's health.

**3.3.61 Outcome.** The result, effects, or consequences of an emergency system encounter on the health status of the patient.

**3.3.62 Patient Contact.** The time that responding personnel first arrived at the patient's side.

**3.3.63 Phone "Off-Hook" (answered in first PSAP).** The time that the telephone is answered in the first PSAP center.

**3.3.64 Protocol.** Protocols define the pre-hospital care management of specific patient problems.

**3.3.65 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).** A facility in which 9-1-1 or other emergency calls are answered, either directly or through rerouting.

**3.3.66 Quality Assessment (QA).** An assessment of the performance of structure, processes, and outcomes within the EMS system and their comparison against a standard.

**3.3.67 Quality Assurance.** The activities undertaken to establish confidence that the products or services available maintain the standard of excellence set for those products or services.

**3.3.68 Quality Improvement.** The activities undertaken to continuously examine and improve the products and services.

**3.3.69 Response.** The deployment of an emergency service resource to an incident. [901, 2016]

**3.3.70\* Response Resources Are Identified.** The time that the PSAP telecommunicator, through computer-aided dispatch or other means, identifies the appropriate resources to send to the scene of the emergency.

**3.3.71 Secondary Dispatch Phone "Off-Hook" Answered (if appropriate).** The time that the second PSAP or second dispatcher answers the phone, begins the interview, collects caller data, begins prearrival instructions.

**3.3.72\* Secondary Dispatch Phone Rings (if appropriate).** The time the telephone begins to ring in the second public safety answering point (or the call screener).

**3.3.73 Staffing.** The number and level of training of personnel deployed on an emergency call.

**3.3.74 Standard Operating Procedure.** A written organizational directive that establishes or prescribes specific operational or administrative methods to be followed routinely for the performance of designated operations or actions. [1521, 2015]

**3.3.75 Standing Orders.** A direction or instruction for delivering patient care without on-line medical oversight backed by authority of the system medical director.

**3.3.76 System.**

**3.3.76.1 EMS System.** A comprehensive, coordinated arrangement of resources and functions that are organized to respond in a timely, staged manner to medical emergencies regardless of their cause.

**3.3.76.2 Geographic Information System (GIS).** A system of computer software, hardware, data, and personnel to describe information tied to a spatial location.

**3.3.77 Telecommunicator.** The individual tasked by a public safety agency as the first of the first responders whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, transmit, and/or dispatch emergency and nonemergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety services via telephone, radio, and other communication devices.

**3.3.78 Time.**

**3.3.78.1 Dispatch Time.** A discrete time stamp that represents unit notification.

**3.3.79 Time of Discovery of Event.** The time that a third party or the patient becomes aware of the need for assistance.

**3.3.80 Time of Result of First Intervention.** The time that the responder first identifies results of the first intervention. For example, when extrication occurred, when return of spontaneous circulation occurred, and so forth.

**3.3.81 Transfer of Care.** The time that responsibility for treatment was transferred from a pre-hospital provider to another — when the hospital personnel physically take over care of the patient.

**3.3.82 Turnout Activation.** Personnel preparation, boarding the vehicle, starting the vehicle, placing the vehicle in gear, and moving the vehicle toward the emergency scene.

**3.3.83 Unit.** A staffed and equipped emergency response vehicle.

**3.3.84 Unit Acknowledgment.** The time that the response unit(s) acknowledges that they have received the notification.

**3.3.85 Unit Arrived on Scene.** The time that the vehicle comes to a complete stop at the scene.

**3.3.86 Unit en Route.** The time that the vehicle first begins moving toward the scene.

**3.3.87 Unit Left Scene.** The time that the vehicle first begins moving from the scene.

guide outlines the core elements of an effective process for developing and implementing EMS system regulations and policies.

**4.2 Oversight.** Within the boundaries of the EMS system, the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) should provide a process for overseeing all system elements.

**4.2.1 EMS Oversight.** EMS system oversight should be the responsibility of a single entity.

**4.2.2 Designation of Lead Agencies.** The AHJ should designate a lead agency to implement and enforce system policies.

**4.3 Authorization.** Provider agencies and personnel should be authorized to provide services. The AHJ should ensure that processes or mechanisms are in place to authorize personnel and agency(ies) to provide services consistent with determined levels of need (*see Chapter 5*).

**4.4 Evaluation.** The AHJ should ensure that mechanisms are in place to continually evaluate and re-evaluate the components of the EMS system. The lead agency should develop a process to identify components of the EMS system, establish requirements for those components, and develop an evaluation process to ensure that components meet established requirements.

**4.5 Roles and Responsibilities.** The lead agency should establish and articulate roles and responsibilities for EMS system participation. Establishing roles and responsibilities for EMS participants should be accomplished through a comprehensive system assessment as described in Chapter 5.

**4.6 Service Levels.** The lead agency should identify service levels and develop guidelines or performance standards for each service level in the community. Service levels, guidelines, and performance standards should be determined by considering factors consistent with local resources and needs, such as community expectations, measurable patient outcomes, resource availability, and financial capability.

**4.7 Management Structure.** The lead agency should have a clear management structure and lines of accountability. The management structure of the lead agency should be defined according to depth and breadth appropriate to the system. Each position within the lead agency should be defined according to its role(s), responsibility(ies), and reporting relationships. EMS system participants should know and understand the management structure and function of the lead agency.

**4.8 Planning.** The lead agency should provide planning for EMS system design. The lead agency should ensure that the EMS system design is based on a systematic planning process. While planning processes may vary significantly between EMS systems, the lead agency should ensure that the process occurs in a manner consistent with identified needs.

**4.9 Authority to Implement Plans.** The lead agency should be empowered to implement plans. Within the system, the AHJ should formally vest the lead agency with responsibility and authority to implement plans.

**4.10 Resources.** The lead agency should have the resources necessary to carry out its function. The AHJ should ensure that adequate fiscal and nonfiscal resources are available and accessible, thereby allowing the lead agency to function effectively.

## Chapter 4 System Regulation and Policy

**4.1 General.** System regulation and policy is fundamental to providing emergency medical services and is the basis for effective system design. Consistent with this recognition is the core principle that a single entity has system oversight and responsibility for the effective coordination of system elements. This entity ensures that the EMS system components are clearly articulated and defined. Furthermore, appropriate mechanisms are instituted to ensure participation of system stakeholders in developing policies and regulations. This chapter of the



**4.11 Participation in Policy Development.** Representatives of user groups and system stakeholders should be involved in designing expectations and developing system policy. The lead agency should identify appropriate participants for system design and policy development. For example, stakeholders may include consumers or users of EMS services, health care providers, hospitals, public health agencies, nursing homes, special populations, educators, governmental officials, and payers.

**4.12 Authority for Policy, Procedure, and Operation.** The lead agency should have the authority to convene EMS expertise to assist in designing and implementing policies, procedures, and operations. The lead agency should be vested with the authority to establish advisory bodies or committees for specific EMS system design elements.

**4.13 Patient Information Protection.** The lead agency should ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to protect patient and quality assurance records.

## Chapter 5 EMS System Analysis and Planning

### 5.1 Introduction.

**5.1.1** Virtually all communities have some form of emergency medical services (EMS) system. For any one community, the *components* of the system and the *level of service* should be tailored to the needs and wants of that community. While an EMS system is unique to the jurisdiction, the industry recognizes a standard approach to assessing local needs and meeting those needs with specific service elements. This chapter of the guide outlines a systematic approach for evaluating and analyzing a jurisdiction's existing EMS system or for determining the system design for a jurisdiction without a dedicated EMS system in place.

**5.1.2** As specified in T. R. Delbridge, et al., *Emergency Medical Services: Agenda for the Future*, "Before creating an EMS system or implementing any EMS system design changes, a community should conduct a comprehensive community analysis that considers available resources, customers, geography, demographics, political conditions, and other unique and special needs of the system. This analysis should focus on these areas, identifying their potential impact on the effectiveness of EMS system components including human resources, medical direction, legislation and regulation, education systems, public education, training, communications, transportation, prevention, public access, communications systems, clinical care, information systems (data collection), and evaluation."

**5.2 Analysis of System Resources.** The EMS system should analyze the resources available to serve the system, including financial resources, equipment and facilities, providers, and participants in the system.

#### 5.2.1 Finances.

**5.2.1.1 Comprehensive Financial Analysis.** The financial status of the community and its capacity to support the EMS system should be evaluated. The analysis includes the financial status of all the entities within the EMS system based on generally accepted accounting principles. (*See Chapter 6.*)

**5.2.1.2 Solvency.** The provider(s) of each EMS system component should be financially solvent by maintaining the financial resources to allow the uninterrupted delivery of essential services.

**5.2.1.3 Funding Stability.** Funding for each component may be through a variety of sources, such as municipal budget/taxes, fee for services, subscription programs, grants, or private donations. Each component should be self-supporting, with adequate reserves to continue to function if the primary funding mechanism is temporarily interrupted or if operating costs exceed available funding.

**5.2.1.4 Budget.** The system should evaluate both an annual operating budget and a capital budget consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.

**5.2.2 Providers.** The system should identify the roles, responsibilities, staffing requirements, and training levels of each provider required for the EMS system to function.

**5.2.2.1 Provider Resources.** EMS systems are composed of the personnel, vehicles, equipment, and facilities used to deliver emergency and nonemergency care to individuals outside a hospital. Key services of an EMS system include public access through a coordinated communications system, public safety and EMS response, and patient transportation. Resources of other nonconventional agencies such as nonemergency ambulance and municipal mass transportation services should be considered.

**5.2.2.2 Role Description.** Each type of service within the system should be clearly defined and fully described in the system design (e.g., the response system may be different from the transportation system).

**5.2.2.3 Role Definition.** Based on the needs and wants of the community, several different types and levels of providers may be required. Roles and responsibilities for each type and level of provider should be identified in order to ensure that the desired level of care is delivered continually and effectively. Examples of provider types are described in 5.2.2.3.1 through 5.2.2.3.6.

**5.2.2.3.1 Telecommunicators.** Telecommunicators provide verification of the incident address and notification of closest EMS system provider. Emergency medical dispatchers (EMDs) provide verification of the incident address; notification of the closest, most appropriate provider; and prearrival patient care instructions.

**5.2.2.3.2 Emergency Medical Responders.** The role of emergency medical responder is as referenced by the NHTSA Office of EMS.

**5.2.2.3.3 Basic Life Support.** The role of basic life support responder is as referenced by the NHTSA Office of EMS.

**5.2.2.3.4 Advanced Life Support (ALS).** The role of ALS responder is as referenced by the NHTSA Office of EMS.

**5.2.2.3.5 Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH).** The role of each MIH provider should be clearly defined by the AHJ over the MIH system.

**5.2.2.3.6 Patient Transportation Provider(s).** Patient transportation providers may offer emergency, nonemergency, or prescheduled medical transportation. The role of each provider type should be clearly defined by the AHJ over the EMS system.

**5.2.3 Participants.** The system identifies the roles and responsibilities of each organization type needed for the EMS system to function.

**5.2.3.1 Structure.** The provider types listed in 5.2.2.3 may be supplied by a single organization or through the combined efforts of multiple organizations, including, but not limited to, those described in 5.2.3.1.1 through 5.2.3.1.6.

**5.2.3.1.1 Fire Department–Based.** The response and patient transportation system uses cross-trained/dual-role fire fighters.

**5.2.3.1.2 Fire Department–Based Oversight.** The response and patient transportation system uses EMS personnel who are not cross-trained as fire suppression personnel.

**5.2.3.1.3 Public Single-Role EMS System.** The response and patient transportation system utilizes single-role public employees.

**5.2.3.1.4 Private Ambulance Provider System.** The response and patient transportation system uses nongovernmental staff.

**5.2.3.1.5 Combined System.** Some other combination of public and private resources is used to provide out-of-hospital care.

**5.2.3.1.6 Additional Provider Types.** Additional provider types such as police-based, hospital-based, wilderness, public corporation, military, nonprofit, and others may provide services independently or in combination with other provider types.

**5.2.3.2 Participant Roles.** The roles and responsibilities for each participant should be organized in a manner that ensures that every component of the system contributes to the effectiveness of the system as a whole, without conflicts in roles and responsibilities.

**5.3 Community Needs Analysis.** While an EMS system is unique to the jurisdiction, a standardized approach should be established for assessing local needs and meeting those needs with specific service elements. The system plan identifies the medical needs of the community for patient care and transport.

#### **5.3.1 Retrospective Evaluation.**

**5.3.1.1 Existing Systems.** For existing EMS systems, community needs and system components should be established based on response data, patient care records, and other information, including the following:

- (1) Demographic data
- (2) Historical patient data and call history
- (3) Unique geographical or environmental conditions
- (4) Local hazards
- (5) Call/incident severity
- (6) Other local data resources as appropriate

**5.3.1.2 No Existing Systems.** For areas without an existing EMS system, system design should be based on established industry standards.

**5.3.2 Prevention Targets.** The system plan should identify vulnerable population groups that would benefit from prevention programs. The community should include primary illness- and injury-prevention programs for age-related hazards, special needs, or special hazard groups, based on an analysis of the community's population.

**5.4 System Goals and Objectives Analysis.** System goals and objectives determine service levels as a function of community needs identified through EMS system evaluation and analysis and community needs assessments.

**5.4.1 System Design.** System design should be dynamic and based on continual evaluation of the EMS system according to defined indicators and performance measures.

**5.4.2 Cost/Benefit.** System design should consider both the costs and benefits of service delivery options.

**5.4.3 Prevention Efforts.** Illness and injury prevention and education efforts should be linked to community needs and resource availability.

**5.4.4 Service Levels.** Service levels should be linked to community needs and expectations.

#### **5.5 System Design Analysis.**

**5.5.1 Data Collection and Evaluation.** The EMS system should be examined in detail over time using indicators set forth in existing industry standards, guidelines, or specific performance measures.

##### **5.5.2 Existing Industry Standards and Regulations.**

**5.5.2.1 Existing Regulatory Standards.** Community EMS agencies should comply with local and state ordinances and rules and regulations. State and local regulations typically regulate local authority, ambulance services and equipment, EMTs, scopes of practice, training, and certification or licensing requirements.

**5.5.2.2 NFPA 1710.** NFPA 1710 is an industry standard on which fire department–based EMS system design analysis may be based. This voluntary standard contains minimum requirements relating to the organization and deployment of emergency medical operations to the public by “substantially all career fire departments.”

**5.5.2.3 Existing EMS Guidelines.** NFPA 1720 is an industry standard on which fire department–based EMS system design analysis may be based. This voluntary standard contains minimum requirements relating to the organization and deployment of emergency medical operations to the public by voluntary fire departments.

**5.5.2.3.1 First Response Unit Guidelines.** The National Institutes of Health has recommended guidelines for first response units. (*See NIH 93-3304, Staffing and Equipping EMS Systems: Rapid Identification and Treatment of Acute Myocardial Infarction.*) These guidelines or others may be applied to local EMS systems.

**5.5.2.3.2 Early Defibrillation Guidelines.** The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) has recommended guidelines for early defibrillation. These or other guidelines may be applied to local EMS systems. For people in cardiac arrest, rapid defibrillation in less than 5 minutes is a high-priority goal.

**5.5.2.3.3 Advanced Life Support (ALS) Unit Deployment Guidelines.** The National Institutes of Health has recommended guidelines for ALS response units. (*See NIH No. 93-3304, Staffing and Equipping EMS Systems: Rapid Identification and Treatment of Acute Myocardial Infarction.*) These guidelines or others may be applied to local EMS systems.



**5.5.2.3.4 Personnel Deployment Guidelines.** ILCOR has recommendations for personnel deployment. These or other guidelines may be applied to local EMS systems.

**5.5.2.4 Chain of Survival.** The concept *chain of survival* is used to describe the following five EMS system components critical to the survival of cardiac arrest victims:

- (1) Immediate recognition of cardiac arrest and activation of the emergency response system
- (2) Early CPR with an emphasis on chest compressions
- (3) Rapid defibrillation
- (4) Effective advanced life support
- (5) Integrated post-cardiac arrest care

### 5.5.3 Performance Measures as System Design Features.

**5.5.3.1** EMS system performance measures are designed to function as a framework for a new system design or as a tool through which a community may monitor the performance of the existing EMS system. Several indicators serve as system design data collection points. Through the continuous measurement of a system's structure, processes, and outcomes using designated indicators and performance measures, EMS system planners may identify areas of the system design that require modification or enhancement.

**5.5.3.2** If subsequent data show that the original goals and objectives of the EMS system are not being met, modification of the EMS system design should be made. Data collection and evaluation is required to assess the EMS system modification and ensure that the system continues to be effective.

**5.5.3.2.1 NHTSA.** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has published the document, *EMS Performance Measures: Recommended Attributes and Indicators for System and Service Performance*, using a consensus process to

develop performance measures for EMS. The document contains indicators and attributes that EMS practitioners identified as critical for performance measurement and evaluation of any emergency medical services system. This resource describes the sources of required data, the formulas or questions necessary to examine critical components, as well as other evaluation criteria parameters.

**5.5.3.2.2 Other Measurement Methods.** Organizations such as the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS), the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and others have published measurements and criteria for EMS systems.

**5.6 Essential System Analysis Components.** The nature of time presents a classic problem in semantics: The same term can have different meanings to different people. Additionally, tradition and unique EMS system design have created a language of time incomparability. The NFPA 450 EMS time template, shown in Table 5.6, is an attempt to solve this problem with consensus terms. The key to this time template is to differentiate clearly between discrete points versus intervals of time. Column A represents discrete points in time or time stamps that occur during an EMS call. Columns B and C label uniquely the elapsed time or intervals between the time stamps.

**5.6.1** The lists in Table 5.6 are not exhaustive but represent typical core points in time and common operational situations. It is not expected that every time stamp be reported. Depending on the EMS system's complexity and level of technology, it is understood that a function interval may be long or instantaneous. However, when reporting EMS system performance, these consensus terms should be used.

**Table 5.6 Essential System Analysis Components**

Column A Discrete Time Stamps	Column B Functional Intervals	Column C Process Intervals
(1) Incident or onset time	(1) Recognition interval (1 to 2)	(1) Event activation (1 to 4)
(2) Time of discovery of event	(2) System access interval (2 to 3)	(2) Citizen reaction (2 to 4)
(3) Call for help	(3) Switching interval (3 to 4)	(3) Call processing (4 to 11)
(4) First PSAP call time	(4) Answer interval "A" (4 to 5)	(4) System response (4 to 14)
(5) Phone "off-hook" (answered in first PSAP)	(5) Routing interval (5 to 6)	(5) Unit response (11 to 14)
(6) Secondary dispatch phone rings — secondary (PSAP) (if appropriate)	(6) Answer interval "B" (6 to 7)	(6) Patient management (14 to 19)
(7) Secondary dispatch phone "off-hook" answered (if appropriate)	(7) Interrogation interval (5 or 7 to 8)	(7) Event to treatment (1 to 15)
(8) Interview ends	(8) Resource selection interval (8 to 9)	(8) Scene management (13 to 17)
(9) Response resources are identified	(9) Alert interval (9 to 10)	(9) Unit cycle (11 to 20)
(10) Dispatch time	(10) Acknowledgment interval (10 to 11)	
(11) Unit acknowledgment	(11) Turn-out interval (11 to 12)	
(12) Unit en route	(12) Travel interval (12 to 13)	
(13) Unit arrived on scene (wheels stopped)	(13) Patient access interval (13 to 14)	
(14) Patient contact	(14) Initial treatment interval (14 to 15)	
(15) First intervention time	(15) Initial result interval (15 to 16)	
(16) Time of result of first intervention	(16) On-scene patient care interval (16 to 17)	
(17) Unit left scene (wheels turning)	(17) Transport interval (17 to 18)	
(18) Arrived at destination	(18) Care transfer interval (18 to 19)	
(19) Transfer of care	(19) Unit-ready interval (19 to 20)	
(20) Available for service		

**5.6.2 Discrete Time Stamp.** The term *time stamp* refers to the historical tradition in EMS during which call events were recorded by stamping a card that printed the hour and minute that was displayed at that moment on that clock. Today, times are often recorded automatically by computerized dispatch systems in hours, minutes, and seconds and are synchronized using the U.S. Naval Observatory's atomic clock. These time stamps define discrete moments at which certain events occur, recorded in hour:minute:second [hh:mm:ss] format. Discrete time stamps, collected in this way, allow the user to measure the interval between events. The system must have the ability to capture time stamps in a reliable, consistent, and accurate manner. Not all time stamps are available or collectible, while others are reported with varying degrees of accuracy. Sharing time stamp data across system components and synchronizing time recording devices are critical to establishing an accurate and reliable measurement process.

**5.6.2.1 Function Intervals.** An interval is the elapsed time between two discrete time stamps. Function intervals are the intervals between consecutive time stamps. The function interval describes the activity occurring at the task level of a single call. Function intervals allow analysis of each function that is taking place throughout the continuum of the event. Certain groups of consecutive functions describe processes.

**5.6.2.2 Process Intervals.** A process interval is made up of multiple, consecutive function intervals. A process interval is used to describe the elapsed time required to complete the agency's or system's objective. The process interval allows decision makers to establish baselines, monitor changes, benchmark to other systems, and create long-term plans.

**5.6.3 Reporting System Data.** When decision makers compare systems to benchmark performance, they must use consistent language and data to describe the function and process intervals. For example, the term *response time* is commonly used but not commonly defined. Therefore, caution must be exercised to ensure that the term describes the identical functions or processes. Yet even when common definitions are used, response times may not be accurately compared. For example, some systems report "average" response times, which fail to adequately describe performance. Comparisons should therefore be based on "fractile" reporting, which, for example, may describe time performance with 90 percent reliability.

**5.6.4** The terms defined in 5.6.4.1 through 5.6.4.3 are used in Table 5.6.

#### 5.6.4.1 Column A Definitions.

- (1) *Incident or onset time.* The time the incident occurred or the time that the symptoms developed.
- (2) *Time of discovery of event.* The time that a third party or the patient becomes aware of the need for assistance.
- (3) *Call for help.* The time that a third party or the patient first attempts to contact outside assistance.
- (4) *First PSAP call time.* The time the telephone begins to ring in the first public safety answering point (or other designated entity).
- (5) *Phone "off-hook" (answered in first PSAP).* The time that the telephone is answered in the first PSAP center.
- (6) *Secondary dispatch phone rings — secondary PSAP (if appropriate).* The time the telephone begins to ring in the second public safety answering point (or the call screener). Many systems will not use secondary dispatch centers.
- (7) *Secondary dispatch phone "off-hook" answered (if appropriate).* The time that the second PSAP or second telecommunicator answers the phone, begins the interview, collects caller data, and begins prearrival instructions.
- (8) *Interview ends.* The time that the PSAP telecommunicator completes the interview with the caller. This time stamp may occur before or after resources are identified, or before or after units arrive on the scene.
- (9) *Response resources are identified.* The time that the PSAP telecommunicator, through computer-aided dispatch or other means, identifies the appropriate resources to send to the scene of the emergency. For example, the telecommunicator may identify ambulance, fire apparatus, quick-response vehicles, police vehicles, specialty vehicles, or other appropriate resources.
- (10) *Dispatch time.* The time the responding unit was notified by the telecommunicator.
- (11) *Unit acknowledgment.* The time that the response unit(s) acknowledged that they have received the notification.
- (12) *Unit en route.* The time that the vehicle first begins moving toward the scene.
- (13) *Unit arrived on scene.* The time that the vehicle comes to a complete stop at the scene.
- (14) *Patient contact.* The time that responding personnel first arrived at the patient's side.
- (15) *First intervention time.* The time that the first intervention, such as an IV, defibrillation, CPR, extrication, and so on, is begun.
- (16) *Time of result of first intervention.* The time that the responder first identifies results of the first intervention, such as when extrication occurred, when return of spontaneous circulation occurred, and so forth.
- (17) *Unit left scene.* The time that the vehicle first begins moving from the scene.
- (18) *Arrived at destination.* The time that the responding unit arrived at the hospital or transfer point.
- (19) *Transfer of care.* The time that responsibility for treatment was transferred from a pre-hospital provider to another — when the hospital personnel physically take over care of the patient.
- (20) *Available for service.* The time the unit was available for response.

#### 5.6.4.2 Column B Definitions.

- (1) *Recognition interval (1 to 2).* The elapsed period starting with (1), Incident or onset time, and ending at (2), Time of discovery of event.
- (2) *System access interval (2 to 3).* The elapsed period starting with (2), Time of discovery of event, and ending at (3), Call for help.
- (3) *Switching interval (3 to 4).* The elapsed period starting with (3), Call for help, and ending at (4), First PSAP call time.
- (4) *Answer interval "A" (4 to 5).* The elapsed period starting with (4), First PSAP call time, and ending at (5), Phone "off-hook" (answered in first PSAP).
- (5) *Routing interval (5 to 6).* The elapsed period starting with (5), Phone "off-hook" (answered in first PSAP), and ending at (6), Secondary dispatch phone rings.
- (6) *Answer interval "B" (6 to 7).* The elapsed period starting with (6), Secondary dispatch phone rings, and ending with (7), Secondary dispatch phone "off hook" answered.

- (7) *Interrogation interval (5 or 7 to 8)*. The elapsed period starting with Phone “off-hook” answered in primary or secondary PSAP and ending with (8), Interview ends.
- (8) *Resource selection interval (8 to 9)*. The elapsed period starting with (8), Interview ends, and ending with (9), Response resources are identified.
- (9) *Alert interval (9 to 10)*. The elapsed period starting with (9), Response resources are identified, and ending with (10), Dispatch time.
- (10) *Acknowledgment interval (10 to 11)*. The elapsed period starting with (10), Dispatch time, and ending with (11), Unit acknowledgment.
- (11) *Turn-out interval (11 to 12)*. The elapsed period starting with (11), Unit acknowledgment, and ending with (12), Unit en route.
- (12) *Travel interval (12 to 13)*. The elapsed period starting with (12), Unit en route, and ending with (13), Unit arrived on scene (wheels stopped).
- (13) *Patient access interval (13 to 14)*. The elapsed period starting with (13), Unit arrived on scene (wheels stopped), and ending with (14), Patient contact.
- (14) *Initial treatment interval (14 to 15)*. The elapsed period starting with (14), Patient contact, and ending with (15), First intervention time.
- (15) *Initial result interval (15 to 16)*. The elapsed period starting with (15), First intervention time, and ending with (16), Time of result of first intervention.
- (16) *On-scene patient care interval (16 to 17)*. The elapsed period starting with (16), Time of result of first intervention, and ending with (17), Unit left scene (wheels turning).
- (17) *Transport interval (17 to 18)*. The elapsed period starting with (17), Unit left scene (wheels turning), and ending with (18), Arrived at destination.
- (18) *Care transfer interval (18 to 19)*. The elapsed period starting with (18), Arrived at destination, and ending with (19), Transfer of care.
- (19) *Unit-ready interval (19 to 20)*. The elapsed period starting with (19), Transfer of care, and ending with (20), Available for service.

#### 5.6.4.3 Column C Definitions.

- (1) *Event activation (1 to 4)*. The elapsed time between the event and when the telephone first rings in the first PSAP. This process includes the recognition interval, the system access interval, and the switching interval, and is intended to measure a system’s ability — using education, technology, or other means — to recognize that an emergency exists and to take immediate steps to access assistance.
- (2) *Citizen reaction (2 to 4)*. The citizen reaction process begins when an event is first discovered and ends when the telephone rings in the first PSAP. The citizen reaction process is intended to measure the system access interval and the switching interval. The process measures the system’s ability to reinforce certain citizen behaviors and provides the means for those citizens to make appropriate access.
- (3) *Call processing (4 to 11)*. The call processing interval is the process that begins when the telephone first rings at the first PSAP and ends when responding units acknowledge that they are aware of the event. The processing interval includes the time required to appropriately answer the telephone in the PSAP, triage and route the call, interview the caller, provide instructions, identify and alert resources, and recognize that the alert has been received.

This interval is intended to measure the system’s ability to quickly process a request for assistance and notify the appropriate responding units.

- (4) *System response (4 to 14)*. The system response interval is the process that begins when the telephone first rings at the first PSAP and ends when the responders arrive at the patient’s side. The system response interval is intended to measure the system’s performance in responding to a call for assistance by considering the call processing interval, as well as the turnout, travel, and patient access intervals.
- (5) *Unit response (11 to 14)*. The unit response interval is the process that begins when the individual unit acknowledges that a response is required and ends with patient contact. The unit response interval is intended to measure an individual unit’s performance in responding to a call for assistance by considering the turnout, travel, and patient access intervals.
- (6) *Patient management (14 to 19)*. The patient management interval is the process that begins when responders first make contact with the patient and ends when responsibility for the patient is transferred to another medical provider. The patient management interval is intended to measure the time committed by the system to meet the needs of the patient and reflects the system’s ability to manage and monitor resources.
- (7) *Event to treatment (1 to 15)*. The event to treatment interval is intended to measure the system’s ability to initiate treatment once an event exists. This interval is intended to measure the process that begins when the event occurs and ends when the first treatment is provided. This process may measure the time that responders, dispatchers, citizens, or others intervene as part of an organized EMS system design.
- (8) *Scene management (13 to 17)*. The scene management interval begins when the first vehicle stops at the scene of an event, and ends when the last patient leaves the scene. The interval is intended to measure the time required to manage the logistics of accessing the patient, providing initial treatment, packaging for transport, and leaving the scene.
- (9) *Unit cycle (11 to 20)*. The unit cycle process reflects the cycle time of an individual unit from activation to availability. The unit cycle process measures the time that a unit is assigned to an event and unavailable for other assignments.

**5.6.5 Call Processing.** System analysis considers call processing the manner in which calls are processed, as well as evaluation of the intervals required to complete the call and notify appropriate providers.

**5.6.6 Call Processing Method.** Community needs should dictate the way that resources are assigned and prioritized.

**5.6.7 Call Processing Time Interval Standards.** Call processing performance objectives should comply with existing standards. For example, NFPA 1221 has established a standard that 95 percent of all emergency calls must be answered in 30 seconds. Dispatch of emergency response aid should be made within 60 seconds of the completed receipt of an emergency alarm.

**5.6.8 Turnout (Activation) Interval.** Turnout interval performance objectives should comply with existing standards. System analysis should consider the provider turnout interval, or the interval from response unit notification to movement of that unit to the location of the incident. For example, NFPA 1710 establishes turnout time objectives of no more than 60 seconds.

**5.6.9 Geography.** System analysis should consider geography and the implications of local geography on service delivery.

**5.6.9.1 Geographic Response Tools.** A geographic information system (GIS) may be used as a tool to model existing service delivery for each EMS system component, such as first response, BLS or ALS care, or patient transportation services. Response capabilities for each mobile system component based on desired travel intervals can be modeled using a GIS system, identifying underserved areas of a jurisdiction, for either current or planned system designs.

**5.6.9.2 Travel Interval.** Travel interval objectives examined by a GIS analysis should parallel standards as established by the lead agency.

**5.6.9.3 First Response.** The AHJ should establish response intervals for the EMS system that are appropriate for the community. The standards should be suitable for the local demographics, resources, medical needs, and geography. The intervals should be systematically monitored for compliance with the local standard.

**5.6.10 Geographic Barriers.** A GIS model may also identify potential barriers to delivery of care (for example, interruption of the road network by construction, flooding, or railroad crossings).

**5.6.11 Distribution of Demand.** A GIS may also identify the distribution of calls in a community and areas undergoing development that would require the expansion of services in the future.

**5.6.12 Demographics.** The system analysis should consider local demographics and the implications of those demographics on service requirements for a range of constituency groups.

**5.6.12.1 Age.** Age-related injuries and illnesses (for example, pediatric, adolescent, or geriatric) should be considered.

**5.6.12.2 Socioeconomics.** A community's socioeconomic structure and its associated injuries and illnesses (e.g., violent crime, lack of prenatal care, or neglect) should be considered.

**5.6.12.3 Gender.** Gender-related injuries and illnesses (e.g., disease rates and treatment plans) should be considered.

**5.6.12.4 Culture and Ethnicity.** Language, cultural diversity, and ethno-specific disease processes should be considered.

**5.6.12.5 Local Industry.** Industrial area injuries and illnesses (e.g., exposure to hazardous materials, injuries from machinery) should be considered.

**5.6.13 Regulatory Environment.** The EMS system should monitor the political and regulatory environments to analyze impacts on operations, funding, and personnel.

**5.6.14 Additional System Needs.** The system analysis should consider other features unique to the system, such as special hazards, needs, and conditions that will affect service delivery.

**5.6.15 Disasters.** The potential for disasters as a function of unique jurisdictional features, characteristics, and risks should be considered.

**5.6.16 Medical Center Resources.** The system analysis should consider resources available through local hospitals (e.g., frequency of hospital "diversion" status, resource hospital training, resupply of disposables and medications, ALS quality assurance).

**5.7 EMS System Planning.** Based on the comprehensive system analysis and the identified system priorities, the system should develop a plan for ongoing system design and improvements. Plan development should include the components specified in 5.7.1 through 5.7.7.5.

**5.7.1 Roles.** Identification should be made of the roles and responsibilities of each position type needed for the EMS system to function, based on the needs and wants of the community.

**5.7.2 Financing.** Annual operating budgets and capital budgets consistent with generally accepted accounting principles should be established.

**5.7.3 Resource Allotment.** Resources should be allocated appropriately between agencies in the system.

**5.7.4 Master Planning/Forecasting.** A master plan should be available that ensures that the necessary resources are available to the system and will meet the needs of future system requirements.

**5.7.5 Disaster/Catastrophe Planning.** The system should ensure that a plan is available to manage overwhelming or catastrophic events, including coordinating activities between and among providers.

**5.7.6 Public Education and Injury/Illness Prevention.** The system plan should include components required to prevent the need for emergency responses.

**5.7.6.1 Traditional Programs.** Traditional illness and injury prevention programs such as CPR and "Stop, Drop, and Roll" should be available and regularly provided to citizens in the system.

**5.7.6.2 Other Programs.** The prevention and public education plan should include an analysis of the environment and an analysis of the need for special prevention programs.

**5.7.6.3 Disaster Preparedness.** The system should coordinate with emergency management programs to ensure that citizens are prepared.

**5.7.6.4 Public Health.** The system should coordinate with public health programs to ensure that the citizens are integrated into the health care system.

**5.7.7 Provider Support.** The system plan should address and consider methods to support individual providers in the system.

**5.7.7.1 Provider Training.** Provider training and support programs should ensure that providers receive training sufficient to meet local needs and support to ensure their continued participation.



**5.7.7.2 Provider Safety.** The following provider safety programs should be in place to reduce the amount and severity of injuries incurred by providers:

- (1) Equipment
- (2) Training
- (3) Accountability systems

**5.7.7.3 Occupational Exposure to Atypically Stressful Events.** Programs designed to address the effects of the exposure to atypically stressful events should be established.

**5.7.7.4 Wellness.** Health and wellness programs should be in place to monitor and support the overall wellness of providers.

**5.7.7.5 Emergency Management.** Disaster preparedness programs should be in place to meet the unique needs of providers during catastrophic events.

**5.8 Continual Risk Assessment and Planning.** The system should have in place a comprehensive process, articulated in a risk assessment plan and overall system design that provides continual analysis and mitigation of risk. The primary risk management processes include risk assessment (internal and external), risk elimination, risk avoidance and prevention, risk control, and loss control.

**5.8.1 Internal System Liabilities Risks.** Internal system liabilities place individual agencies or the EMS system at risk. Examples of such risks include workplace violence, financial improprieties, discrimination, and harassment.

**5.8.2 External-Community Risks.** External system liabilities place community members at risk. Examples include risks to the community from provider negligence, inappropriate vehicle operation, lack of compliance with training standards, improper maintenance, and inadequate quality assurance processes.

**5.8.3 Risk Control.** Measures should be taken to guard against and protect personnel from potential exposures to risks.

**5.8.4 Loss Control.** Measures should be taken to limit losses through processes such as early-return-to-work programs.

**5.9 System Assessment Cycle.** The system should have a process in place to continually review and analyze the EMS system using an assessment cycle that includes the following components:

- (1) Data collection
- (2) Evaluation
- (3) Analysis
- (4) Proposing
- (5) Planning
- (6) Implementation

**5.10 Current Conditions.** System data should be used to identify current conditions and trends.

**5.10.1 Changing Needs.** The data should consider the nature of a changing geography over time, population distribution, and the alteration of the transportation network.

**5.10.1.1 Changes in Transportation.** Transportation network changes should be monitored and considered.

**5.10.1.2 Changing Political Boundaries.** The plan should include new annexations and the effect of such annexations on service provision or system financing.

**5.10.1.3 Regional Changes.** Regional changes (e.g., changing regional disaster risk areas, financial trends affecting entire regions) should be monitored, evaluated, and planned for.

**5.10.2 Changing Demographics.** The regular review should, at a minimum, re-evaluate the changing demographic trends in the system.

**5.10.2.1 Short-Term Changes.** Individual events, such as concerts and sporting events, may cause short-term demographic shifts.

**5.10.2.2 Long-Term Changes.** Long-term changes (such as an aging population) should be considered when re-evaluating the plan.

**5.10.3 Changing Public Health Conditions.** The system should conduct external environmental scans to anticipate or identify new public health threats in order to prepare the EMS system to respond to such threats.

**5.10.4 Unique Local Needs.** Unique features and hazards should be monitored when the EMS system plan is updated.

**5.11 Data Element/Collection/Analysis/Reporting.** Regular analysis of system component data should be conducted to determine dynamic needs.

**5.11.1 Regular Re-evaluation of Data.** EMS system performance measure data should be reviewed at least annually to evaluate the specific components within the system. Each component should be evaluated more often based on the original intent of the system and established protocols.

**5.11.2 Data Sharing.** System data should be shared, as legally appropriate, among agencies and medical facilities in the system.

**5.11.3 NEMSIS.** The National Emergency Medical Services Information Systems (NEMSIS) was developed to create a single national EMS data dictionary and EMS data exchange standard as well as to ensure that EMS data has a central repository for review, analysis, and dissemination.

**5.12 Feedback Loop.** A feedback mechanism should be in place to ensure that proposed and implemented changes in the system result in the desired improvements and meet the goals and objectives identified by EMS system planners.

## Chapter 6 Finance

**6.1 Determining Cost of System.** The system plan should include a method for determining costs. Methodologies have been specified to identify all costs associated with EMS elements or components. Different methods exist for determining costs for public and private organizations; costing of services may have different applications. Therefore, a number of national organizations have developed cost allocation methods, each with its own applications, benefits, and shortcomings.

**6.1.1 Specification and Categorization of Direct Costs.** The EMS system should be able to define the direct costs of each system element.

**6.1.1.1** Direct operating costs should be established for each phase of operations. The direct costs are those that can be assigned directly to a particular component of the operation, and should include start-up and ongoing costs. The EMS system should be able to understand and recognize the nature

of the costs required to start up a new phase of operations and perpetuate those operations.

**6.1.1.2** The system should identify the start-up costs of the operation. At a minimum, the system should be able to identify and calculate the start-up costs for the following:

- (1) Emergency medical and other equipment
- (2) Vehicles
- (3) Supplies and materials
- (4) Facilities
- (5) Primary personnel
- (6) Direct labor
- (7) Support personnel
- (8) Training, including certification and licensing fees

**6.1.1.3** The system should identify the ongoing or continuous costs of delivering EMS services. At a minimum, the system should be able to identify and calculate and, if appropriate, allocate the ongoing replacement and maintenance costs for the following:

- (1) Emergency medical and other equipment
- (2) Vehicles
- (3) Fuel
- (4) Supplies and materials
- (5) Facilities
- (6) Ongoing personnel
- (7) Primary personnel costs, including salaries and all associated pay-related costs
- (8) Personnel benefits
- (9) Support personnel
- (10) Ongoing communications system
- (11) Ongoing training, including certification and licensing fees

**6.1.2 Specification and Categorization of Indirect Costs.** The EMS system should be able to identify the indirect cost of each system element. The indirect cost should be allocated based on the level of effort required to perform different types of work. Some examples of such costs include the following:

- (1) Insurance noncovered expenses
- (2) Legal services and consultation
- (3) Medical oversight
- (4) Contract services
- (5) Regulatory compliance
- (6) Billing services
- (7) Information management

**6.2 Method for Anticipating System Funding Sources.** The EMS system should be able to identify and predict the revenue sources available to support a viable EMS system. Given the diversity of funding sources for EMS systems, the system should take into consideration the following potential funding sources:

- (1) Fee-for-service resources such as the following:
  - (a) Private pay
  - (b) Third-party pay
  - (c) Bad debt or contractual allowances based on uncollected revenues
- (2) Government reimbursement, such as the following:
  - (a) Medicare
  - (b) Medicaid
  - (c) Military/government and dependent care

(3) Contractual agreements such as the following:

- (a) Capitated agreement
- (b) Contract service
- (c) Special event
- (4) Public and private grants
- (5) Public funding, such as the following:
  - (a) Taxes
  - (b) EMS operating levies
  - (c) Bond levies
- (6) Statutory revenue
- (7) Corporate funding, if available
- (8) Civic group funding
- (9) Public and private donations
- (10) Subscription programs
- (11) Investment revenues
- (12) Other subsidies
- (13) Foundations

**6.3 Use of Revenue and Cost Analysis.** System planning should use revenue and cost analyses to establish system priorities, goals, and objectives, and allow the system to predict future financial capabilities.

**6.4 Financial Plans.** A financial plan should be developed that reflects sound analysis and planning of short- and long-term operating need. While financial planning at the system level may not be achievable for all types of systems, all EMS systems should be concerned about the financial ability of agencies to ensure ongoing operations.

**6.4.1 Short-Term Financial Plan.** A short-term financial plan should be created for providing ongoing services. Short-term financial planning should be represented through annual operating and capital budgets.

**6.4.1.1** An operating budget should be prepared, approved, and reviewed regularly.

**6.4.1.2** A capital budget should be prepared, approved, and reviewed regularly.

**6.4.2 Long-Term Plan.** A long-term financial plan should be developed to forecast long-term capital needs, potential changes in revenue streams, and potentials for new or alternate methods of providing services. The following are considerations for long-term financial planning for EMS systems:

- (1) The potential for new services
- (2) The potential for changes in reimbursement structures
- (3) Development of a contingency plan for unknown or unanticipated expenditures
- (4) Justification for resources and requirements
- (5) A cash flow forecast
- (6) A revenue projection

**6.5 Business Analysis.** A business analysis should be conducted at regular intervals. A business analysis allows the EMS system to monitor its performance and compares its performance against contemporary benchmarks. The following are recognized elements that should be considered in a business analysis:

- (1) Financial performance measures
- (2) Market analysis, including prevailing rates
- (3) Cost shifting, if present



- (4) Maintenance of adequate reserves to ensure ongoing operations
- (5) Matching resources to requirements to ensure that funding is adequate
- (6) Development of a standardized cost analysis tool

**6.6 Additional Financial Issues.** The system should consider additional issues. Given the diversity of local EMS systems, local agencies should be able to identify or recognize fiscal considerations that are beyond the scope of standard financial practices.

**6.6.1** The collection methodology should be appropriate and reviewed regularly. The EMS system should recognize the uniqueness, importance, and value of the financial reimbursement and collection process. The EMS system should regularly evaluate billing methodologies.

**6.6.1.1** Regulatory restrictions should be considered with respect to the billing process. Collection methods should recognize and consider the following local, state, and federal requirements:

- (1) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- (2) Medicare and Medicaid
- (3) Employee Retirement Income Security Act
- (4) State and federal insurance regulations

**6.6.1.2** The collection process should be appropriate to the system. The EMS system should ensure that methods are in place to evaluate collection processes and should ensure that those processes are consistent with community expectations. The following collection processes should be considered by the EMS system:

- (1) In-house collections
- (2) Regular evaluation of collection rates
- (3) Contracted collection
- (4) Payer requirements
- (5) Appropriate documentation for the system, and provision of training to ensure appropriate documentation

**6.6.2** The system should be prepared to provide financial reporting information that articulates the financial health and performance of the system. At a minimum, the financial report should include the following:

- (1) Gross billings
- (2) Collection rate
- (3) Billing mix (ALS, BLS, scheduled, unscheduled, miles per transport, and other billing codes according to local standards)
- (4) Payer mix, including uninsured
- (5) Accounts receivable turnover rate
- (6) Bad debt expense
- (7) Contractual allowances
- (8) Write-offs
- (9) Net revenues

**6.6.3** Partnerships should be considered. The system should take steps to forge partnerships when appropriate. In an effort to reduce overall system expenditures, the EMS system should consider taking advantage of fiscal and operating synergies where opportunities exist for collaborative relationships within the system.

## Chapter 7 Medical Oversight

**7.1 General.** Effective medical oversight ensures that physicians have appropriate clinical oversight of the emergency medical system. This includes, for example, oversight of on- and off-line medical direction, protocol development, clinical quality assurance and improvement, understanding of emergency operations, and field observations. There are documents that are either in print or in development that should be used to assist those physicians who are involved in medical direction and oversight.

**7.2 Single Medical Authority.** The system should have in place a single medical authority, or medical authority structure, responsible for patient care oversight and responsibility. Individual agencies in the system may have medical directors that provide agency-specific oversight.

**7.3 System Support of Medical Authority.** The system should provide the resources necessary to ensure that the medical authority can fulfill his or her obligations. Some examples may include physical infrastructure, staff support, communications, and liability coverage.

**7.4 Medical Authority Role.** The medical authority should provide oversight for the EMS system; however, the medical authority, in some cases, can be the same person as the medical director. The role of the medical authority for the system should be clearly defined and should include the following responsibilities:

- (1) Recommending certification, recertification, and decertification of nonphysician pre-hospital personnel to the appropriate certifying agency
- (2) Establishing an EMS advisory committee to review system medical issues
- (3) Providing direction and authorization for the development and revision of systemwide protocols, policies, and procedures for all patient care activities from dispatch through triage, treatment, and transport
- (4) Establishing criteria for the provider training level of initial emergency response
- (5) Establishing criteria for determining the most appropriate patient destination
- (6) Ensuring the competency of personnel who provide direct medical oversight to pre-hospital personnel including, but not limited to, physicians, EMTs, and nurses
- (7) Establishing the procedures or protocols under which nontransport of patients is permitted
- (8) Providing direction and authorization for educating and testing to the level of proficiency approved for different certification levels within the EMS system
- (9) Providing direction for an effective systemwide quality improvement program
- (10) Providing direction, authorization, and credentialing for personnel eligibility to provide patient care
- (11) Removing authorization for personnel eligibility to provide patient care for due cause, using an approved review and appeals mechanism
- (12) Establishing functional criteria for equipment used in patient care

**7.5 Medical Director Responsibilities.** The primary responsibility of the agency's medical director should be to ensure quality patient care, from EMS system access to transfer to definitive care. In addition, the physician(s) should perform the following:

- (1) Serve as patient advocate
- (2) Set and ensure compliance with patient care standards, including communication standards and medical protocols
- (3) Provide direction and authorization for the development and revision of systemwide protocols, policies, and procedures for all patient care activities from dispatch through triage, treatment, and transport
- (4) Develop and implement the process for the provision of direct medical oversight
- (5) Establish the appropriateness of initial qualifications of pre-hospital personnel involved in patient care and emergency medical dispatch
- (6) Ensure that the qualifications of pre-hospital personnel involved in patient care and emergency medical dispatch are maintained
- (7) Provide direction for effective quality improvement programs for continuous system and patient care improvement
- (8) Promote EMS research
- (9) Maintain liaison with the medical community, including, but not limited to, hospitals, emergency departments, physicians, pre-hospital providers, and nurses
- (10) Interact with regional, state, and local EMS authorities to ensure that standards, needs, and requirements are met and resources are optimized
- (11) Participate in planning activities such as mutual aid, disaster planning and management, and hazardous materials response
- (12) Promote public education consistent with system goals
- (13) Maintain knowledge levels appropriate for an EMS medical director through continued education
- (14) Actively participate in on-scene activities with appropriate training

**7.6 On-Line and Off-Line (Direct and Indirect) Medical Direction.** Medical directors can provide direct and indirect (on-line and off-line) medical oversight.

**7.6.1** During direct medical direction, the medical director (or designee) should provide voice or other real-time communication to the practitioner.

**7.6.2** Indirect medical direction includes prospective medical oversight and retrospective medical evaluation.

**7.6.2.1** Prospective methods can include participating in the training, testing, and certification of providers; protocol development; operational policy and procedures development; and legislative activities.

**7.6.2.2** Retrospective activities should include participation in a medical audit and review of care.

**7.6.2.3** Various aspects of prospective and retrospective medical oversight can be handled by committees functioning under the medical director with representation from appropriate medical and EMS personnel.

**7.6.3** Standards should be established for the certification, training, and monitoring of other system physicians.

**7.7 Medical Director Qualifications.** To optimize medical oversight of all pre-hospital EMS, physicians should have the following qualifications as described by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), United States Fire Administration (USFA), and National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP):

- (1) License to practice medicine or osteopathy within the system's boundaries
- (2) Familiarity with the design and operation of pre-hospital EMS systems
- (3) Experience or training in pre-hospital emergency care
- (4) Experience or training in medical direction/oversight of pre-hospital emergency units
- (5) Active participation in the emergency department management of the acutely ill or injured patient
- (6) Experience or training in the instruction of pre-hospital personnel
- (7) Experience or training in the EMS quality improvement process
- (8) Knowledge of EMS laws and regulations
- (9) Knowledge of EMS dispatch and communications
- (10) Knowledge of local mass casualty and disaster plans
- (11) Preferred board certified in emergency medicine: American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM); American Osteopathic Board of Emergency Medicine (AOBEM)
- (12) Preferred completed fellowship training in EMS
- (13) Preferred subspecialty as an EMS-certified physician through NAEMSP and ACEP

## Chapter 8 Quality Management, Clinical Quality, and Data Reliability

**8.1 Quality Management Program.** A defined quality management program should be developed. The program should identify areas for improvement, evaluate system performance, prioritize development, establish system controls, monitor performance indicators, and re-evaluate system impact.

**8.2 Performance Objectives.** A defined quality management program should establish performance objectives based on accepted industry standards and guidelines.

**8.2.1** Patient care objectives should be developed systemwide based on community needs and expectations, desired patient outcomes, and local resources. Appropriate medical destinations should be incorporated as part of the patient care objectives. Compliance with established protocols should be monitored. Customer satisfaction and feedback should be incorporated into the system.

**8.2.2** System evaluation should be integrated into the quality management program.

**8.2.2.1** Performance measures should be established and data collected consistent with the NEMSIS data dictionary. (*See 5.5.3 through 5.5.3.2.2.*)

**8.2.2.2** The system should measure both resources and availability for the following:

- (1) Defibrillator
- (2) Extrication tool(s)
- (3) Ancillary resources
- (4) Medical facilities for availability and diversion policies
- (5) Unit availability

**8.2.2.3** Staffing and deployment objectives should be monitored and appropriate for the system.

**8.2.2.4** Standard operating procedures and guidelines should be established, periodically reviewed, and updated.

**8.2.2.5** Training should be evaluated for continuity and content based on industry guidelines and desired system performance.

**8.2.2.6** Staff turnover should be evaluated for causes and effects.

**8.2.2.7** Equipment maintenance should be monitored and appropriate for the system.

**8.2.2.8** System design and changes should be evaluated using a cost/benefit analysis.

**8.2.2.9** The communications system should be evaluated based on industry performance guidelines.

**8.2.2.10** Interagency relationships and agreements should be reviewed periodically for effectiveness and system needs.

**8.2.3** The system should use uniform data element definitions. The system should identify and capture appropriate data points. A uniform pre-hospital patient care record should be used throughout the EMS system. A method should be in place to capture and review data at the system, agency, and individual provider level.

**8.2.3.1** The system should use a uniform data set. Examples of data sets are available through NHTSA, *National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)*, and others.

**8.2.3.2** The data should be available for inclusion in the NEMSIS data repository.

**8.3 Public Health Outcome Parameters.** Public health outcome parameters should be developed for each performance objective through the use of benchmarking, if possible.

**8.3.1** Standardized outcome measures should be specified based on contemporary professional standards.

**8.3.2** U.S. Public Health Service outcome models, which include the measurement of the reduction of discomfort, disability, death, destitution, dissatisfaction, and disease, should be referenced.

**8.3.3** A system should be in place to share information between system participants, including patient care facilities, and to obtain information from outside databases, such as the following:

- (1) Medical examiner reports
- (2) Hospital records
- (3) Trauma registry
- (4) Cardiac registry
- (5) Stroke registry
- (6) Transport registry reports
- (7) Discharge data
- (8) Other appropriate databases

**8.4 Physician Participation.** A quality management program should include physician participation.

**8.5 Patient Confidentiality.** All data management programs should maintain patient confidentiality, at a minimum in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

**8.6 Injury/Illness Reduction and Prevention.** The quality management program should incorporate standards directed at reducing injuries and illnesses in the community based on the system data.

**8.7 Complaints.** A consistent process should be in place to address complaints.

**8.8 Participation in Studies and Research.** The system participants may develop relationships with academic institutions and/or researchers to take an active role in studies and research using system data as follows:

- (1) Establish credible data collection process
- (2) Identify research issues
- (3) Provide linkage (to other studies)
- (4) Identify research funding sources
- (5) Publish study results in recognized peer-reviewed journals

**8.9 System Review.** All quality management systems should be reviewed on a regular basis for effectiveness.

**8.10 Documentation.** The EMS system should be able to provide documentation of its quality management program, including quality assessment and improvement methods, provider training programs, prevention strategies, and system performance measures.

**8.11 Multiple Clocks Within a System.** Most EMS systems use one clock to record certain events, while other clocks record time stamps for other events. When more than one clock is used, time discrepancies are much more likely. For example, a 9-1-1 center dispatch clock may not be synchronized with the clock used by a responding agency. Therefore, when multiple clocks are used in a system to record discrete time stamps, all efforts should be made to synchronize those clocks.

## Chapter 9 Public Information, Education, and Relations (PIER)

**9.1 Public Education.** The local EMS system should take steps to establish a coordinated program of public information and relations.

**9.1.1** Education efforts should be coordinated to ensure public awareness of system access in the education efforts. The participants in the system should work collaboratively to ensure that the telephone number for appropriate system access is properly promoted.

**9.1.2** Education efforts should ensure coordinated delivery systems for PIER activities. The education messages delivered by system providers should be coordinated to ensure consistency. Education messages should use appropriate methods of delivery (e.g., print media, electronic media, television, radio) that are consistent among providers.

**9.1.3** Education efforts should be coordinated to ensure public awareness of injury and illness prevention programs. Education efforts should attempt to reduce the incidence of injuries and illness. Providers should work together to design programs that focus on preventing injuries and illnesses by analyzing local or regional data, researching methods of intervening, and implementing the most appropriate methods.

**9.1.4** Messages should be delivered according to the diverse needs of constituent groups.

**9.1.5 Community and bystander response principles** should be included in education efforts. Education efforts should be designed to evaluate opportunities for bystander and community intervention.

**9.2 Public Education System Goals.** The participants in the system should evaluate the existing system and plan for improvements (see 5.7.6 through 5.7.6.3). Such efforts should address public access, recognition, and intervention to improve patient outcomes.

**9.3 Qualifications of Personnel for PIER Activities.** Specialized skills are required to provide effective public communications. The EMS system should have one or more such personnel.

**9.4 PIER Activities.** The participants in the system should work together to develop a working group of public education specialists. The PIER group should include EMS personnel, educators, and public information specialists, as well as local or national experts on specialized topics.

#### **9.5 PIER Activities Related to Mass Gatherings.**

**9.5.1** Methods for accessing EMS may differ during mass gatherings, and participants at mass gatherings may travel from other areas.

**9.5.2** Planning for mass gatherings should be conducted uniformly throughout the system. The participants in the system should collaborate to effect planning for mass gatherings that could be different from EMS system planning. Planning methods should include providing information to patrons about locating and accessing emergency medical assistance.

**9.5.2.1** Information should be provided during the event. Emergency medical resources should be easily identified and accessed by patrons, and known to all event workers.

**9.5.2.2** After the event, PIER personnel should participate in evaluating the event, focusing on improving communication for future gatherings. That evaluation should consider the ability of patrons to locate and access medical resources.

**9.6 PIER Activities.** PIER activities should be directed at the general public, EMS personnel, and medical personnel. Public education personnel in the system should target activities to ensure the best outcomes. EMS and medical personnel should be included in the public education efforts so that messages are consistent.

**9.7 EMS Agenda for the Future.** PIER activities should be targeted to parallel the *EMS Agenda for the Future*. Local EMS agencies should consider the agenda for the future as a fundamental building block of public information programs for EMS.

**9.8 Disaster Education.** Disaster education should be provided according to system goals. The local EMS PIER personnel, in cooperation with emergency management agencies, should provide plans for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from catastrophic events.

**9.9 Collaborative Efforts.** The EMS system should develop plans for mutual aid, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination of PIER activities. Not only should the system create those collaborative efforts, but it should also develop plans for individual organizations such as pre-hospital providers, fire agencies, hospitals, public safety agencies, emergency management

organizations, local governments, law enforcement agencies, public health, and other public and private entities.

**9.10 Identification of Available Public Media Resources.** PIER planning personnel should identify the media resources that are available to the system and the appropriate information that may be provided. Resources may include print and electronic media and printed and audio/visual publications.

**9.11 Identification of Funding Resources.** The EMS system should identify funding sources and partners to ensure stable funding for PIER activities.

## **Chapter 10 Communications**

**10.1 Introduction.** Communications serve as the entry point to access pre-hospital response. In addition, communications systems provide the infrastructure and operational support for responders to link resources for EMS activities. Policies and procedures should ensure that access and use of all components comprising communication system resources are in place and ensure efficient and effective delivery of service.

**10.2 Access of Emergency Services.** A single number (enhanced 9-1-1 is optimal) should be used to access emergency services. The 9-1-1 emergency number is the preferred access number because it is a nationally recognized emergency telephone number. The nature of 9-1-1 calls necessitates responding directly to the caller with minimal delay even when the caller cannot provide information to the public safety answering point (PSAP).

**10.2.1 Emergency Access Number.** Policies and procedures should be established to differentiate the emergency access number (9-1-1) from advertised nonemergency access numbers.

**10.2.2 Automatic Number Identification (ANI).** ANI displays the phone number of the party calling 9-1-1. The data displayed should be verified with the caller.

**10.2.3 Automatic Location Identification (ALI).** ALI should be available and should display the phone number, name, address, and appropriate agencies for response for the telephone that was used to call 9-1-1. ALI serving a single-line, multiline, or wireless telephone system should associate a location with the caller's telephone number. Additional information such as apartment number, space number, building hazards, unique access requirements, phone location in the building, and pre-existing medical conditions should be displayed.

**10.2.4 Access to Nonemergency Services.** When other non-emergency help lines exist (such as 2-1-1, 3-1-1, and other numbers), policies and procedures should be in place to ensure that emergency calls received by alternative systems are immediately directed to the appropriate PSAP.

**10.2.5 Multilanguage Interpretation.** The system should provide multilingual interpretation for non-English-speaking people through established linguistic services.

**10.2.6 Hearing Impaired Telephone Services.** Services for the hearing impaired, such as telephone devices for the deaf (TDD), should be available and used in the system.



**10.3 Lead Agency.** A single lead agency should be responsible for coordinating EMS communications. The lead agency is the agency, usually a public agency, that has the principal responsibility, assigned by the AHJ.

**10.3.1 Communication Center Coordination.** The communication centers should incorporate EMS system goals and objectives into center operations. The communication centers should have a defined administrative structure.

**10.3.2 User Agencies.** A user agency is any agency other than the lead agency having a specific interest in EMS communication in the jurisdiction it serves. User agencies should be represented within the communication center governing structure.

**10.4 Centralized Communication Plan.** A systemwide communication plan should be in place that functionally consolidates dispatch centers.

**10.4.1 Plan Outcomes.** The EMS system should describe methods to optimize administrative costs, improve administrative services, lower economic costs of service, and improve service benefits from the communication infrastructure. The communication plan should articulate how these benefits will be achieved.

**10.4.2 Communication Relationships.** The EMS communication plan should describe and define the communication relationships between system agencies. Such relationships may include managing emergency information, providing a unified communication control system, transferring or handling (without duplicating) event information, and ensuring compatibility of communication devices.

**10.5 Computer-Aided Dispatch.** The system should include computer-aided dispatch (CAD), which allows for reference location information such as location of previous incidents, duplicate incidents, or premise/hazard information. The CAD system should provide a method of selecting appropriate response units.

**10.5.1** Automatic vehicle locaters (AVL), when used, will assist the CAD system in selecting the closest appropriate unit.

**10.5.2** Mobile data computers (MDCs) allow the CAD system to automatically gather and report appropriate response information.

**10.6 Capture of Key Data Elements.** The communications system should capture key data elements and report performance.

**10.6.1 Data Capture and Reporting Elements.** The communications system should, at a minimum, be able to capture and report on the following data elements:

- (1) Response intervals
- (2) E9-1-1 system access
- (3) Call processing interval
- (4) Dispatch time
- (5) Turnout interval
- (6) Travel interval
- (7) Patient contact time
- (8) En route to hospital (or other facility) time
- (9) Arrival at hospital time
- (10) Unit available for service

### **10.6.2 Additional Data and CAD Elements.**

**10.6.2.1 CAD Interface Capabilities.** The CAD should be able to interface with other dispatch computers within the EMS system.

**10.6.2.2 Data Retrieval.** The CAD system should ensure ease of data input and retrieval.

**10.6.2.3 National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).** The CAD system should be able to capture and report information according to the requirements of *NFIRS*.

**10.6.2.4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).** The CAD should be able to capture essential data elements recommended by NHTSA.

**10.6.3 Data Integration.** A system of integrating and reporting data should be available for all responders in the system.

**10.7 Quality Management.** A system should be in place to monitor the quality of the communications system. Communications improvements should be made based on quality evaluations and technological advancements.

**10.8 Communications Equipment.** The age and reliability of equipment should be monitored regularly.

**10.8.1 Equipment Maintenance.** An equipment maintenance plan should be developed and followed.

**10.8.2 Financial Plans.** Financial plans should anticipate repair and maintenance needs. Funding methodologies should be established that minimize the impacts of capital expenditures for new or replacement equipment.

**10.9 Operability.** The communications system should allow communications between all providers in all operating environments.

**10.9.1 Operating Security.** The system should ensure that secured or dedicated frequencies are available that are not affected by private users (especially cellular telephone users) and should ensure the physical and electronic security of communication resources.

**10.9.2 Tactical Frequencies.** Tactical operating frequencies should be available to reduce high-traffic radio communications and for use during multiagency events.

**10.9.3 Disaster Operations.** Disaster communication frequencies should be available and used during disasters, mass casualty incidents, and other multiple-patient scenes according to the standards of the system.

**10.9.3.1** The disaster communication process should be dependable to minimize loss of service.

**10.9.3.2** Backup systems should be in place in case of the primary system's interruption.

**10.9.3.3** High incident response levels (HIRL) should support major events and minimize dispatch volumes. Primary dispatch activities should be limited to emergent incidents; routine calls should be managed by local jurisdiction on an "as available" assignment.

**10.10 Criteria-Based Dispatch.** Criteria-based dispatch (CBD) protocols should be used to prioritize requests for service and dispatch resources according to pre-established criteria.

**10.10.1 Pre-Arrival Instructions.** The dispatch center should establish standards for providing medically approved pre-arrival instructions.

**10.10.2 Quality Assurance.** The system should use quality assurance measures, such as outcome, comparison, and validation information, to ensure continuous improvement.

**10.11 Training.** Call receivers/dispatchers should participate in and complete a nationally recognized and accepted emergency medical dispatch certification program and should receive on-the-job, site-specific training. Call receivers/dispatchers should regularly participate in continuing education.

**10.12 Direct Medical Control.** The EMS system should ensure that direct medical control is available for all field responders.

**10.13 Nonemergency Services.** Methods should be in place to provide alternative medical services for those requests that do not require emergency medical responses.

## Chapter 11 Equipment and Facilities

**11.1 Standard for First Response and Ambulance Transportation.** The system should have a standard for first response and ambulance transportation equipment. The EMS system should have a standard or method to determine the equipment and related specifications needed in the system for all patients. The method could permit individual agencies to make equipment determinations.

**11.1.1 Vehicles.** The EMS system should create specifications for first response and transport vehicles used within the system. A part of the vehicle standard may include allowing individual agencies to make purchasing decisions within the restrictions established by the EMS specification or by state or national standards, such as NFPA 1917.

**11.1.2 Biomedical Equipment.** The EMS system should create specifications for first response and transport biomedical equipment used within the system.

**11.1.3 Durable Equipment.** The EMS system should create specifications for first response and transport durable equipment used within the system.

**11.2 Replacement Plan.** A replacement plan should be developed at the time the equipment is purchased, based on the life expectancy of each equipment type.

**11.3 Response Vehicle Licenses.** EMS system equipment should be licensed according to local or statewide emergency medical regulations.

**11.4 Inspecting Emergency Equipment.** The EMS system should develop plans for inspecting equipment and inventory carried aboard emergency response vehicles. Regular inspections should be conducted every shift, every day, every week, and every month by on-duty personnel. EMS system regulators should conduct announced and unannounced inspections on a regular basis. Inspection lists should be developed based, at a minimum, on manufacturers' recommendations.

**11.5 Personnel Education and Training.** All personnel should receive the training necessary to ensure that they can effectively operate emergency vehicles. In addition to driver training, the training courses should include basic inspection requirements

for ambulances and other emergency vehicles meeting NFPA 1451.

**11.5.1 Maintenance of Driving Licenses.** Periodic records checks should ensure that licenses are in place and not suspended or revoked.

**11.5.2 Operator Assessment.** The system should have processes in place to identify at-risk vehicle operators and should develop measures to ensure safe vehicle operation.

**11.6 Maintenance Plans.** The maintenance program should have plans in place that provide a schedule for maintenance and carefully articulated maintenance plans for all major equipment used in the system, including vehicles, biomedical equipment, or other medical equipment. The plans should include a replacement schedule and plans to provide reserve equipment or equipment "on loan" during repair periods.

**11.7 Maintenance Personnel for Emergency Equipment.** The maintenance program should provide vehicle, biomedical, and hardware maintenance using specially trained personnel. The EMS system should adopt policies to ensure that maintenance personnel are appropriately trained for that maintenance. (*See NFPA 1071.*)

**11.8 Response Facilities.** Ambulance and other responders' facilities should be located based on analysis of demand and/or risk-hazard evaluation. Agencies should participate in joint efforts to cooperatively determine the best location for facilities.

**11.8.1** EMS facilities may be available (designed) for other medical or clinical services. If appropriate to the local jurisdiction, the EMS participants should consider enhancing facilities for use in advanced medical services.

**11.8.2** Ambulance and other response facilities should be designed consistent with system demands and community needs.

**11.8.3** The EMS system should designate receiving facilities based on capability, capacity, and location.

## Chapter 12 Human Resources

**12.1 Introduction.** Human resources are important to both individual agencies and to the broader EMS system. As such, while EMS system planners and regulators should ensure that minimum standards exist in the system for monitoring, managing, and ensuring appropriate staff performance, they also must ensure that individual agencies have appropriate personnel management structures in place.

**12.2 Recruitment.** The EMS system should recruit according to its needs, as determined by system analysis, design, and planning.

**12.2.1 Selection.** The system should have a process for candidate selection that includes procedures for hiring or membership.

**12.2.2 Wages/Benefits.** The plan for any compensation should be clearly spelled out in system documents.



**12.3 Education/Training/Certification.** The system should ensure that personnel maintain required certification and/or licensure.

**12.3.1 Training Program.** The system should have a comprehensive training plan.

**12.3.1.1** The training plan should provide uniform curricula based on established standards.

**12.3.1.2** The training program and instructors should be regularly monitored and evaluated.

**12.3.2 Certification.** Certification standards should be appropriate and uniform throughout the system.

**12.3.2.1** System requirements for recertification should be disseminated to personnel.

**12.3.2.2** The system should include the capability to track individual certification/licensure and the need for renewal thereof.

**12.3.2.3** The system should ensure that the training programs necessary for certification and recertification are available in or to the system.

**12.3.3 Educational Opportunities.** Educational opportunities should be made available to personnel in the system.

**12.3.4 Training/Education Records.** Personnel training and/or education records should be maintained by system administrators.

**12.4 Retention.** The system or region should take steps to encourage continued participation of personnel. Programs should be appropriate to the local area but may include the following:

- (1) Length of service award programs (LOSAPs)
- (2) Incentive plans
- (3) Recognition plans
- (4) Educational/training opportunities
- (5) Job advancement/advancement opportunity programs
- (6) Provider support

## **12.5 Personnel.**

**12.5.1 Processes.** The system should have one or more processes in place to ensure effective working relationships between working groups and agencies.

### **12.5.2 Employee/Member.**

**12.5.2.1** The lead agency should ensure that a regularly scheduled, objective personnel evaluation process is in place.

**12.5.2.2** Job specifications should be clearly defined.

**12.5.2.3** Levels of training should be appropriate to meet service needs.

**12.5.2.4** The agency should use the criteria covered by 12.5.2.4.1 and 12.5.2.4.2.

**12.5.2.4.1** Agencies in the system should have appropriate staffing and scheduling methods to ensure adequate delivery of services based upon the community needs assessment.

**12.5.2.4.2** Quality assurance and improvement programs should be in place for each agency participating in the system.

**12.5.2.5** The system should ensure that personnel have agency and provider level identification.

**12.6 Rules and Regulations.** Rules and regulations should be structured to provide for uniform management of personnel in the system.

**12.6.1** The system should have established rules and regulations for acceptable behavior, activities, and actions.

**12.6.2** The system should have established minimum operational policies and guidelines.

**12.6.3** The system should have a process in place to manage discipline, appeals, grievances, and other personnel actions.

**12.6.4** The system should have a process in place to ensure compliance with occupational safety regulations.

**12.7 Health and Safety.** The system should ensure that each agency has and implements a written comprehensive health and safety plan.

**12.7.1** Personal protective equipment meeting NFPA 1999 should be available to all personnel and should be used according to system standards and manufacturer recommendations.

**12.7.2** Health and wellness programs should be in place to prevent participant illness and injury.

**12.7.3** These health and wellness programs should include training on bloodborne pathogens meeting NFPA 1581 and 29 CFR 1910.1030, *Bloodborne Pathogens*.

**12.7.4** A program to address occupational exposure to atypically stressful events should be in place.

**12.7.5** An employee assistance program (EAP) should be in place.

## **Chapter 13 Operations**

**13.1 Implementation of System Design (Operations).** The EMS system operations include the coordination of multiple system elements. That is why each component should be considered not only in the context of its operational application but also in relationship to other factors within the system.

**13.2 System Preparation.** EMS operations should be implemented based on EMS system planning, analysis, and financial capability.

**13.3 Communications Coordination.** EMS communications should be coordinated based on EMS system design and available local resources.

**13.4 Response Coordination.** Plans for first or initial response, ambulance response and transport, and alternate methods of transport should be in place as determined by EMS system analysis and planning, including the availability of additional resources as required by system demands.

**13.5 Incident Management.** The function of incident management is the overall management and coordination of, and accountability for, all responding personnel and resources.

**13.5.1** The incident management system (IMS) as described in NFPA 1561 should be consistent throughout all agencies that can be expected to interact.

**13.5.2** The system should be based on a strategy of efficient and effective utilization of resources. It should address chain of command, including transfer of authority of any officer or position. It should provide for delineation of responsibilities and authority for all involved response personnel and agencies.

**13.6 Treatment Guidelines.** Patient care should be consistent with AHJ guidelines, industry standards, medical oversight, established protocols, and desired patient outcomes.

**13.7 Patient Destination (Transport).** Patient destination guidelines should be consistent with AHJ guidelines, medical oversight, established protocols, and desired patient outcomes.

**13.8 Functional Capabilities of Health Care Facilities.** The EMS system, in concert with the local medical community, should create standards for functional capabilities of health care facilities and determine the types of patients who should be delivered to those facilities.

**13.8.1** The functional information should be disseminated to emergency care personnel. The system should have a plan in place to provide functional information to emergency personnel, and the plan should be monitored to ensure that patients are transported to the appropriate facility.

**13.8.2** The system should define medical center capabilities for the following:

- (1) Primary, secondary, and tertiary medical facilities
- (2) Alternate health care facilities
- (3) Hospice
- (4) Specialized care facilities, such as trauma, burn, pediatric, cardiac, hyperbaric, psychiatric, obstetric, spinal cord, and sexual assault
- (5) Other facilities appropriate to the local system

**13.8.3** The pre-hospital triage program and destination policies should provide for transport to appropriate facilities and for backup plans for facilities that are on diversion.

**13.9 Coordinated Medical Oversight.** A plan should be implemented that allows for direct and indirect medical oversight, coordinating acute medical care, patient care protocol development, and additional components of the quality management program.

**13.10 Quality Management/Documentation.** All EMS activities including patient care, transport, training, and research documentation should be included in the implementation of a quality management program.

**13.11 Logistics.** Systemwide supply and equipment programs such as the following should be implemented to standardize equipment selection and to facilitate interagency supply and equipment use and sharing:

- (1) Restocking of materials, disposables, and consumables
- (2) Decontamination of equipment and vehicles
- (3) Equipment repair and replacement
- (4) Data collection and management
- (5) Support for extended duration incident operations

**13.12 Staff Management.** Staff recruitment, development, evaluation, education, training, and retention programs should be in place to ensure that sufficient numbers and types of qualified providers are available based on EMS system design.

**13.13 Public Information, Education, and Relations.** A program should be in place to allow for an information inter-

face with the community, including EMS access information, public education, system public relations, and incident information management.

**13.14 Regulatory Compliance.** The system should ensure that systemwide operations comply with local, state, and federal regulations and laws, including, but not limited to, state-mandated reporting, federal health and safety regulations, certification requirements, financial reporting, communicable disease reporting, and communications component authorization.

**13.15 Automatic and Mutual Aid.** Automatic and mutual aid agreements should provide for system and backup responses.

**13.16 Alternative Patient Transport.** A plan for alternative patient transport should be in place.

**13.17 Training.** EMS agencies within a region should jointly train and prepare for emergency responses.

**13.17.1 Training Requirements.** Each EMS agency and jurisdiction should establish training requirements and should develop and utilize a training program based on the needs assessment of the community.

**13.17.2 Coordinated Training Plan.** The plan should be a coordinated interagency effort. Appropriate agencies should have regular interaction.

**13.17.3 Training for Disasters and Multicasualty Incidents.** EMS personnel at all levels within their respective organizations should be trained to meet their responsibilities in the course of a multicasualty incident.

#### **13.18 Emergency Response Planning.**

**13.18.1** Participants in the local EMS system should be familiar with local emergency management agencies' local annexes and emergency operation plans as defined in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) publication *Civil Preparedness Guide (CPG)*.

**13.18.2** The system should ensure that each agency or jurisdiction has a plan to meet its own needs within its capabilities.

**13.18.3** The system should encourage each EMS agency or jurisdiction to enter into mutual aid agreements with other local or regional jurisdictions.

**13.19 Joint Coordination and Planning.** Participants in the local EMS system should be involved in planning, needs assessment, training, integration, coordination, mutual aid, provision of resources, and evaluation of the response of a local EMS organization to a multiple-patient incident.

**13.19.1** The EMS system's plan should conform to appropriate regional and state plans.

**13.19.2** The plan should be a coordinated interagency effort. Responsible participants should have regular interaction in order to facilitate working relations during an incident.

**13.20 Research and Development.** The system should participate in research-based evaluation of all system components and should use objective criteria to evaluate, develop, and purchase equipment.

## Annex A Explanatory Material

*Annex A is not a part of the recommendations of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only. This annex contains explanatory material, numbered to correspond with the applicable text paragraphs.*

**A.3.2.1 Approved.** The National Fire Protection Association does not approve, inspect, or certify any installations, procedures, equipment, or materials; nor does it approve or evaluate testing laboratories. In determining the acceptability of installations, procedures, equipment, or materials, the authority having jurisdiction may base acceptance on compliance with NFPA or other appropriate standards. In the absence of such standards, said authority may require evidence of proper installation, procedure, or use. The authority having jurisdiction may also refer to the listings or labeling practices of an organization that is concerned with product evaluations and is thus in a position to determine compliance with appropriate standards for the current production of listed items.

**A.3.2.2 Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ).** The phrase “authority having jurisdiction,” or its acronym AHJ, is used in NFPA documents in a broad manner, since jurisdictions and approval agencies vary, as do their responsibilities. Where public safety is primary, the authority having jurisdiction may be a federal, state, local, or other regional department or individual such as a fire chief; fire marshal; chief of a fire prevention bureau, labor department, or health department; building official; electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority. For insurance purposes, an insurance inspection department, rating bureau, or other insurance company representative may be the authority having jurisdiction. In many circumstances, the property owner or his or her designated agent assumes the role of the authority having jurisdiction; at government installations, the commanding officer or departmental official may be the authority having jurisdiction.

**A.3.3.15 Chain of Survival.** The chain of survival is composed of five distinct links: immediate recognition of cardiac arrest and activation of the emergency response system; early CPR with an emphasis on chest compressions; rapid defibrillation; effective advanced life support (ALS); and integrated post-cardiac arrest care.

**A.3.3.46.2 Turnout Interval.** This interval includes personnel preparation for response, boarding the responding apparatus/vehicle, placing the apparatus/vehicle in gear for response, and wheels rolling toward the emergency scene.

**A.3.3.51.1 Off-Line (Indirect) Medical Direction.** All EMS providers should follow the protocols developed and/or implemented by the medical director of their EMS agency.

**A.3.3.51.2 On-Line (Direct) Medical Direction.** The mechanism for this contact can be radio, telephone, or other means as technology develops, but it should include person-to-person communication of patient status and orders to be carried out.

**A.3.3.52 Medical Director.** Ideally, this physician would be subspecialty trained in EMS.

**A.3.3.53 Medical Oversight.** Medical control is the now obsolete term for medical oversight and medical direction.

**A.3.3.58 National EMS Information Systems (NEMSIS).** Since the 1970s, the need for EMS information systems and databases has been well established, and many statewide data systems have been created. However, these EMS systems vary in their

ability to collect patient and systems data and allow analysis at a local, state, and national level.

**A.3.3.70 Response Resources Are Identified.** For example, the telecommunicator might identify ambulance, fire apparatus, quick-response vehicles, police vehicles, specialty vehicles, or other appropriate resources.

**A.3.3.72 Secondary Dispatch Phone Rings (if appropriate).** Many systems do not use secondary dispatch centers.

## Annex B Informational References

### B.1 Referenced Publications. (Reserved)

**B.2 Informational References.** The following documents or portions thereof are listed here as informational resources only. They are not directly referenced in this guide.

**B.2.1 ASTM Publications.** ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, P.O. Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959.

F1031, *Standard Practice for Training the Emergency Medical Technician (Basic)*, 2013.

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