



**Government of the
District of Columbia**



Department: Department of Health
Administration: Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration
Section: Emergency Medical Services
Policy Name: Procedure for Certification as an Emergency Medical Services Agency
Policy Number: 2014-0024
Effective Date: 31 March 2014

Approved By: Brian Amy, MD, Senior Deputy Director, HEPRA 
Applies To: Emergency Medical Service Agencies
Purpose: Description of the Application and Certification Process of Emergency Medical Service Agencies
Reference: Emergency Medical Services Act of 2008, Section 4
DCMR Title 29, Chapter 5, Sections 502, 504, 506, 507, 509, 556, 557, 558 and 560
Revision: Original

Section 4 of the EMS Act requires that all EMS response organizations within the District obtain certification from DOH. Title 29, Chapter 5, of the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) sets forth the requirements to be certified as an EMS agency. The following policy is designed to allow the District to comply with the standards set forth by the DC EMS Act of 2008 (DC Law 17-357) and the DCMR.

Certification as an Emergency Medical Service Agency

EMS agencies, including those who provide only first responder services or special event services, regardless of whether the agency utilizes an ambulance, must be certified by the District of Columbia Department of Health. Those EMS agencies that operate an ambulance must also obtain a Certificate of Need (CON) prior to submitting for certification. EMS agencies that complete the application process will be certified for a period of no more than two (2) years

EMS agencies currently certified in the District at the time this policy becomes effective will be considered to be certified for a period of no more than two (2) years, expiring on 31 December 2015. Prior to this date, these agencies will be required successfully to complete the Self Assessment application process.

Certificate of Need (CON) Requirement

Those EMS agencies that desire to provide EMS transport services are required to obtain a CON prior to being certified by the Department of Health. Agencies required to obtain a CON must maintain that CON in order to maintain their certification as an EMS agency.

Application Process

The EMS Agency certification procedure is a two-step process. The first step is to complete and submit the Self Assessment application. This includes submission of all relevant documents. Once the application is reviewed and approved by the EMS Division, a site visit will be conducted to inspect the facilities and any vehicles that the agency intends to use. Upon successful completion of the site visit, the agency will be certified for a period of time not greater than two (2) years.

Self Assessment Application

Any EMS agency that desires to provide pre-hospital emergency medical services must submit an application (DC-DOH EMS Form 2014-0024A) to the Department of Health through the District of Columbia EMS Officer. The application must show compliance with all of the items in the applicable sections of DCMR Title 29, Chapter 5.

Vehicle Certification Application

If the EMS Agency intends to operate any EMS response vehicles (this includes ambulances and first response vehicles), a copy of the vehicle certification application (DC-DOH EMS Form 2014-0023B) should be completed for each vehicle. Include these applications with the Agency's Self Assessment application.

Site Visit

After a completed application is accepted by DOH, a site visit shall be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. If an applicant can demonstrate a reasonable basis for concern with a member of the Site Visit Team, DOH shall consider these allegations of conflicts of interest. If they are found to exist between a site reviewer and an applicant, that member of the site review team shall be replaced.

The site review team shall complete a written report within 30-days after the site visit. The site review team's report will be submitted along with a recommendation to the District EMS Officer.

Inspections during the Site Visit

The DOH shall inspect each applicant's facility before issuing a certificate. The inspection will include the inspection of personnel, equipment, the premises, records and operational procedures. Vehicle inspections can also be performed at this time. Vehicle inspections are conducted in accordance to the Vehicle Inspection and Certification Policy (DC-DOH EMS Policy 2014-0023).

Letter of Preliminary Review

An applicant can request a Letter of Preliminary Review (LPR) at the time they submit their application. The LPR will temporarily allow an EMS organization applicant to provide medical services only at special events, and without the use of an ambulance. If an LPR requested, a decision on the issuance of an LPR will be announced within 10 business days of the application submission date.

For an LPR to be issued, the preliminary review must find that the application appears complete and there is the likelihood that a full certification will be issued. The EMS providers who will provide care must be currently certified with a District certified EMS Agency and their forms for Co-sponsorship (DC-DOH EMS Form 2011-0018) are included in the Self Assessment Application Package. Patient care protocols must be submitted and the applicant has a patient care reporting system in place.

If at any time during the full review process it is determined that that the applicant will not be certified, the LPR will be revoked. If the LPR is revoked, the applicant must immediately cease to provide any and all special event medical services. The applicant has the right to request an appeal of this decision as outlined in the *Suspension/Revocation/Denial of Certification* section below.

Certification

If DOH determines that the applicant meets the requirements of the law, applicable regulations and this policy, DOH shall grant the applicant a certification as an EMS Agency for a period of no longer than two (2) years. To maintain approval, the organization shall comply with the requirements as set forth in this policy and the applicable sections of the DCMR Title 29, Chapter 5.

After DOH issues a certificate, DOH may inspect an EMS agency on a scheduled or random basis. The inspection may include any or all of the applicable items as listed in DCMR, Title 29, Chapter 5. An Emergency Medical Service agency may be asked furnish to DOH, upon the request of an inspector, a copy of any insurance policy required by current regulations. They may also request copies of any records maintained by the Agency.

The certification received by the EMS Agency is not transferable. The certificate shall be displayed in the principal place of business of the agency, with a copy in each place of operation.

Agency Updates

An EMS agency that has a change approved to their Certificate of Need shall notify the EMS Division of the Department of Health of the changes within ten (10) business days of the approval. Any expansion of any service provided by the organization, or if the headquarters or any substation location of the organization is changed that does not require a change in the CON, shall be reported to the DOH within ten (10) business days. The agency shall also notify DOH of any changes in leadership or personnel as outlined in Title 29, Chapter 5 of the DCMR within the same ten (10) business day time period.

Certification Renewal

Each EMS agency will be required to renew their certification at the end of their certification period. The agencies will be notified six months prior to the end of their certification period of the type of application they will need to submit (short form or long form).

Organizations that submit their annual reports and keep the District EMS Officer updated on the changes at the organization will qualify for renewal through submission of the EMS Agency Certification Renewal Short Form (DC-DOH EMS Form 2014-0024B). Those agencies that do not provide timely updates the District EMS Officer will be required to complete a new Self Assessment Application (DC-DOH EMS Form 2014-0024A) for their renewal process.

Suspension/Revocation/Denial of Certification

DOH may suspend or revoke an agency's certificate at any time DOH determines that the organization no longer meets the requirements outlined in the DCMR for operating as a certified EMS agency. The agency has the right to appeal any such ruling with the District Office of Administrative Hearings. Further, if DOH denies an application for certification, the agency may appeal the denial pursuant to the rules of the Office of Administrative Hearings.