

Policy and Procedures

Title: Ambulance Responses

Date issued / last revision: December 26, 2003

Date effective: Immediately

Ambulance Responses

Statement:

It is the policy of Cooperstown Medical Transport, Inc. (CMT) that all company emergency vehicles should be operated only by trained and authorized operators in a manner that provides for the safety of all persons and property. While operating an emergency vehicle you are responsible not only for the safety of the patient, but of fellow crewmembers, family riding with the patient, other medical personnel accompanying the patient, the drivers of other emergency vehicles, and to the general public. You are also responsible for protecting the costly equipment needed for the performance of your duties. Every CMT employee must be constantly aware of these responsibilities and perform accordingly, consciously avoiding unnecessary speed and recklessness, which could have disastrous consequences.

Purpose:

CMT is establishing policy and procedure regarding ambulance responses.

Scope:

This policy applies to all CMT employees, full time, part time and interns.

Policy:

1. Echo, Delta, Charlie, and Bravo Responses (Priority 1): **For emergency responses only!** When your dispatcher receives a call for assistance and determines the nature to be a true emergency, you will respond to the call in this mode. This requires the use of all warning lights and siren. Headlights will be on at all times while the vehicle is moving.

This mode requires the crew to respond en-route to the scene within two minutes of call receipt.

- a. Use moderate speed: Emergency vehicles should not be operated at speeds greater than 10 mph over the posted speed limits. Remain in control of your vehicle at all times and observe all traffic warning signals.
- b. **When approaching an intersection, if you have a STOP sign, YIELD sign or RED light, or active Railroad crossing, you will come to a COMPLETE STOP to be sure all drivers are aware of your presence. After everyone has yielded you can proceed through the intersection.** Decelerate and use caution when approaching an intersection where you have a GREEN light or the right-of-way. Do not exceed the posted speed limits at intersections.
- c. When approaching a stopped school bus, with its red flashers activated, you must come to a complete stop and remain stopped until the flashers are deactivated or the driver directs you to pass.
- d. When you approach the rear of a moving vehicle or an occupied stationary vehicle, decelerate well in advance (a minimum of 100 feet) to warn drivers. Only when you are positive of their intentions, may you proceed past them.

When at all possible, pass cars on the LEFT. If you need to pass on the right be absolutely sure the driver of the other vehicle knows of your intentions before you proceed.

- e. When approaching moving vehicles on outside highway roads, have the driver's side wheels as close to the dividing line as practical. This will give warning in the side view and rear view mirrors as you approach. Oncoming traffic will also yield, warning the driver who may not see you coming from behind. **USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN DOING THIS! DO NOT "bully" your way down the road.**
 - i. **FOR IN CITY USE: 0700-2200 hrs:** All warning lights will be on and siren in use at all times in an Echo, Delta or Charlie response. (Out of courtesy, please restrict siren use through intersections near the station.) **2200-0700 hrs:** When warning lights are in use, siren may be used **AS NEEDED**, as per guidelines above. However, passing through a **RED** light or **STOP** sign at an occupied intersection demands the use of the siren.
 - ii. **FOR OUTSIDE HIGHWAY USE:** When the warning lights are in use, the siren may be used as needed as per the guidelines above. Use moderate speed, sound the siren 300 feet prior to approaching a vehicle or intersection.
 - f. Whenever possible, discontinue the use of all warning devices just prior to arrival on scene and then continue in Priority-2 mode.
2. **Alpha, and Omega Responses (Priority 2):** When your dispatcher receives a call that is determined to be other than a life-threatening emergency, you will respond with out warning lights and siren. Headlights will be on at all times while the vehicle is moving. You must obey all traffic laws, including driving within the speed limit. This mode requires response en-route to the scene within 10 minutes of call receipt or arrival on scene ten minutes prior to scheduled pickup time.
 3. At no time shall a vehicle be operated en route to a scene in a mode other than that assigned by the dispatcher.
 4. **PARKING:** If you must park on the roadway during a call, be sure to have warning lights in use. When not parked in the roadway, shut off all warning equipment unless needed to mark a location (i.e. medivac) Always attempt to park in a position that is out of direct traffic. At accident scenes, park your vehicle at least 50 feet from the nearest point of danger, out of direct traffic.
 5. **BACKING:** Backing of vehicles on scene is hazardous and should be avoided whenever possible. Consider that it may be safer and easier to proceed forward and make a U-turn, then to back off or into the roadway. Where backing is unavoidable, a spotter outside the vehicle should be used. The spotter should be placed $\approx 10'$ from the rear of the vehicle on the operator's side and must be in the operator's view at all times. If the operator loses sight of the spotter at any time, the vehicle must be stopped and the spotter located. In addition a spotter should be used when a vehicle must negotiate forward turns with restrictive side clearance and where height clearance is uncertain. The purpose for the spotter is to expand the driver's sense for

left, right, front and rear space cushion. In circumstance where an ambulance or response vehicle is staffed with only the driver (i.e. at the time in which an ambulance is preparing to leave the scene enroute to a hospital) the driver should attempt to utilize any available emergency personnel (police, fire, etc.) to act as spotters. Where no personnel are available to assist, the driver shall make a complete survey of the space cushion around all four sides of the vehicle to determine if any obstructions are present

6. **ALS INTERCEPTS:** After you intercept with another ambulance requiring our assistance and after the care provider joins the crew of the other ambulance, the driver will proceed directly to the hospital without warning lights and siren and obeying all traffic rules and regulations. When a Fly Car is used, if necessary, an approved driver of the other ambulance crew or police agency may drive the vehicle, in a non-emergency mode to a convenient prearranged location. If a vehicle must be left on scene, then it must be left in a safe, secure manner with concern for environmental conditions.
7. **MULTIPLE UNITS:** When more than one response unit is enroute to a scene in Priority-1 mode, the first arriving certified EMT shall be responsible to determine the mode of response of all other responding units.
 - a. Units in Priority-1 responding in a 'convoy' should remember that vehicles which have yielded to the first response unit often pull back onto the road into the path of the second response vehicle. When responding in a convoy use great caution and whenever possible different siren tones.
8. **FROM THE SCENE TO THE HOSPITAL:** At no time will a non-CMT approved and authorized driver operate a CMT ambulance when a patient is being transported. Use whatever mode of response to the hospital that is appropriate to the patient's condition. This decision is situation based, and is the responsibility of the crew, realizing that once the ambulance attendant has stabilized the patient, Priority 1 transport is often unnecessary. Although the highest trained EMT on the call is ultimately responsible for patient outcome, the driver has an equal responsibility in the safe operation of the ambulance. Decisions on mode of response from scene to hospital shall be made jointly based on the following considerations:
 - a. Patient condition
 - b. Road, traffic and weather conditions
 - c. Vehicle type and condition

It is important to remember drivers are charged with the responsibility of safe vehicle operation no matter what mode of response is used.