

POLICY #81-3



EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD)

Issue Date: 6/27/2018

Revision Date: 6/26/2020

Review Date: 6/21/19; 6/26/20

Issuing Authority: Richard Fuller

Accreditation Standards:

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The purpose of this policy is to establish operational guidelines for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) in the communication center.

Emergency Medical Dispatch is now clearly recognized as an essential component of an effective EMS system. It operates on sound medical protocols to obtain all pertinent facts from a caller to evaluate and dispatch the most effective EMS services to an accident, illness, or disaster scene. During that response, bystanders may be instructed in emergency first aid procedures by the dispatcher using the approved EMD information standards i.e.: card set, software etc. This information is geared toward recognizing and intervening in life threatening emergencies until first responders arrive at the scene.

DEFINITIONS

Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) – The primary and initial point of contact for callers seeking medical assistance. ¹

Basic Life Support – Staffed by Basic Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT-B) personnel. They provide treatment and transport of sick and injured where more advanced treatments and interventions are not required. They also may be used to assist or back up ALS responders. ²

Advanced Life Support - Staffed by Emergency Medical Technicians Intermediate or (EMT-I) or by Emergency Medical Technicians Paramedic (EMT-P) personnel. They have advanced training in the care and treatment of the sick and injured and can perform a variety of medical functions. These include, but are not limited to BLS, advanced cardiac life support and Electrocardiogram (EKG) interpretations, administering cardiac medication and other therapeutic medication along with airway maintenance techniques. ³

¹ Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Fifth Editions, Version 5.3; chapter-page 1-2, 1-3, 1-6, 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-6

² Ibid

³ Ibid

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Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) – QA/QI is a system of call review, data evaluation and feedback reporting used to provide continuous performance enhancement of the overall system. QA/QI personnel provide for formal presence of medical oversight and quality assurance activities in dispatch. ⁴

POLICY

The Weymouth Police Department utilizes the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) system when handling Emergency Medical calls that are designed to provide the best quality pre/post arrival patient care possible.

The process of call-handling and dispatch of medical calls has been developed under the nationally recognized protocols developed by APCO and have been adapted to the needs of the Weymouth Police Department.

This Department has adopted various EMD program elements that support the proper use of the APCO EMD protocols. These include EMD certification, training and EMD call review designed to improve call handling skills for every Telecommunicator and EMD Manager. An EMD Manager has been established to review the operation of this program, make changes, and work on improving the dispatching EMD procedures.

The Communications Center will provide the Telecommunicators with the most current APCO EMD protocols and Practices. As new research and technologies in Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and EMD become available we will review these advances and determine if they will be implemented into the Communications Center. The Weymouth Police Department is committed to providing the best level of care to the patients in the communities we serve.

APCO will notify the Weymouth Police Department when new releases of the APCO EMD program become available. The Communications Center will review these new releases for all EMD Telecommunicators, provide the necessary training, and implement the updates into our existing EMD program. The Communications Center will always have the EMD Manager approve these updates prior to implementation. The Communications Center will also provide updated training required to properly utilize these updates.

PROCEDURES

1. EMD Manager

1.1. The Communications Center has set into place an EMD Manager to help develop and implement EMD.

1.2. The EMD Manager will oversee the entire EMD program and ensure that all proper procedures are being followed, training is up to date, and the EMD program is compliant with all associated standards and requirements.

⁴ Ibid

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1.3. EMD Trainer/Instructor- the EMD Trainer/Instructor will provide the proper training to the Telecommunicators to ensure that every Telecommunicator receives proper certifications and recertifications in the APCO EMD program as the current standards and protocols require.

1.4. Medical Director- the EMD Director will review and ensure that all medical terminology and direction are compliant and current with all emergency response configurations.

2. Certification

2.1. All current and future Telecommunicators employed as a Telecommunicator are required to obtain CPR and APCO Emergency Medical Dispatch certification. The department will provide the necessary training required to facilitate obtaining this certification and maintaining this certification.

2.2. If a current employee or prospective employee does not pass the certification exam on the first attempt, he/she will be provided with additional training by the APCO EMD Instructor prior to re-taking the certification exam. If he/she is still unable to pass the certification exam on the re-test, then he/she will be subjected to re-taking the initial EMD course. At the completion of that course he/she will be given the opportunity to take the certification exam for a third time.

2.3. If the Telecommunicator or the prospective Telecommunicator is still unable to pass the certification exam, then he/she will be subjected to disciplinary action, which will result in termination.

3. Recertification

3.1. All Telecommunicators are currently required to re-certify every two years. All Telecommunicators are required to maintain current EMD certifications as part of their program, for employment as a Telecommunicator for the Weymouth Police Department. The EMD Manager will be responsible for ensuring that every Telecommunicator meets or exceeds the training and re-training mandates set forth by APCO. The current minimum re-certification requirements are 24hrs of continuing dispatch education every two years, a current CPR certification and successful completion of the APCO EMD re-certification exam.

3.2. If a current Telecommunicator or a prospective employee does not pass the re-certification exam on the first attempt, he/she will be provided with additional training by the APCO EMD Instructor prior to re-taking the recertification exam.

3.3. If he/she is still unable to pass the re-certification exam on the re-test, then he/she will be subjected to re-taking the initial EMD course at the earliest date and time available. If the Telecommunicator is unable to pass the re-certification exam the Telecommunicator will be subjected to disciplinary action. At the completion of that course he/she will be provided the opportunity to take the re-certification exam for a third time. If the Telecommunicator or the prospective Telecommunicator is still unable to pass the re-certification exam, then he/she will be subjected to disciplinary action, which will result in termination.

4. Continuing Education (CDE Credits / Hours)

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- 4.1. The Communications Center will provide all Telecommunicators with the opportunity to attend classes, meetings and seminars that have been approved by the Communications Center APCO EMD committee for credit towards CDE hours that are required to maintain all Telecommunicators APCO EMD certifications. The EMD Manager will be responsible for scheduling these educational opportunities for all the Telecommunicators. All approved classes, seminars, workshops, and meetings will be relevant to EMDs and their associated work.
- 4.2. The EMD Manager will post additional CDE opportunities when they become available.
5. EMD Guide Cards / EMS Call Handling
 - 5.1. The Communications Center will provide each dispatch workstation with a set of APCO EMD guide cards & software. Currently the Communications Center is operating with 2 workstations, these EMD guide cards & software will be kept current and accurate at all times. It will be the Telecommunicator's responsibility to review these cards from time to time to remain current with the proper usage of the APCO EMD guide card.
 - 5.2. APCO card sets shall only be used when the 911 Advisor Software is not available due to CAD, network, or other technical problems
 - 5.3. The current call taking standards for an EMS incident is as follows and will remain unchanged:
 - 5.3.1. Patients Location
 - 5.3.2. Call back number
 - 5.3.3. Chief Complaint
 - 5.3.4. Is the patient conscious / breathing
 - 5.4. After obtaining this information, the Telecommunicator will dispatch the appropriate ALS/BLS units. If a BLS ambulance is responding to the medical call and the chief complaint falls into an ALS criterion, the Telecommunicator will ask over the radio if the responding BLS unit would like ALS to be dispatched. The Telecommunicator will then follow the APCO EMD Guide card into a secondary interrogation to determine the appropriate pre/post-arrival instructions. The Telecommunicator will keep the responding units updated as to what pre-post arrival instructions are being administered.
6. Language Translation
 - 6.1. If the Telecommunicator should receive an EMS call where the caller is not speaking English, the Telecommunicator will be permitted to speak directly with the caller if the Telecommunicator is able to speak the same language.
 - 6.2. When the Telecommunicator cannot understand a caller due to a language barrier, then the Telecommunicator will utilize the Communications Center approved telephone translation service. This service is currently managed and operated by Qwest Translation service (The single button transfer is located under Special Services tab located on the Auto Dial panel). The Qwest operator will work with you to determine the language being spoken and assist the Telecommunicator with the appropriate translations.

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7. Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement

7.1. Responsibilities of EMD

- 7.1.1. An EMD receives and processes calls for Emergency Medical Service assistance.
- 7.1.2. An EMD must determine the nature and severity of the medical incident type without diagnosing the medical problem or condition.
- 7.1.3. Coordinating and dispatching EMS resources based on the predetermined response configurations found in local medically approved EMD Guide Cards.
- 7.1.4. Provides emergency medical assistance using local medically approved EMD Guide Cards and software.
- 7.1.5. Maintains confidentiality.
- 7.1.6. Maintaining contact with the caller.

7.2. Responsibilities of QA/QI

7.2.1. Circular Evolution of EMD Programs.⁵

- Feedback guides the advancement and improvement of the system. Without this process the program falters and becomes stale.

7.2.2. Provide dispatch feedback and performance monitoring.⁶

- Weekly feedback with respect to their guide card use and how their performance affects the system generally.

7.2.3. The following QA/QI evaluations shall be met:

- Random 7-10% of all EMD calls will be reviewed.
- The following SHALL be reviewed:
 - All cardiac arrest calls
 - All AED use calls/dispatch assisted.
 - Narcan administered/bystander dispatch assisted/police administered/fire administered.
 - High profile calls:
 - Fatal MVA
 - Shootings
 - Stabbing
 - Drowning
 - Any call dispatchers request to be reviewed.
 - Any call QA evaluators see necessary.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

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7.2.4. QA evaluators from Weymouth PD and South Shore Hospital will meet quarterly, or more often as needed, to review calls.

- Roundtable discussion to give feedback to dispatchers on certain calls.
- Meet with dispatcher(s) who have unacceptable or needs improvement performance levels.

8. EMD Emergency Rule

8.1. When a Telecommunicator is in a situation of over-capacity in the Communications Center, the Telecommunicator shall make every effort to provide Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) services to callers. However, in times of over-capacity the Telecommunicator will be granted the opportunity to suspend EMD using the Emergency clause.

8.2. The following are some acceptable reasons why a Telecommunicator can suspend EMD.

8.2.1. Additional 911 calls are being received (waiting to be answered)

8.2.2. Mass Casualty Incident

8.2.3. Natural Disaster

8.2.4. Officer Safety is in jeopardy

8.3. When the Emergency Rule is enacted the Telecommunicator will make a notation in the narrative of the call that due to [specific reason noted above] reason the Emergency rule was enacted. A printed copy of the call will then be given to the EMD Manager for proper documentation.

8.4. When a Telecommunicator is about to release a 911 caller while enacting the Emergency Rule, the Telecommunicator will say (or similar) "I need to hang up now to take another call. Help is on the way. If the patient gets worse in any way, call me back immediately for further instructions". This will allow the caller to understand why the Telecommunicator is disconnecting the call while reassuring the caller that appropriate help is on the way.

8.5. It will be the practice of the Communications Center to not EMD a motor vehicle accident unless there is an ejection of one or more of the occupants. If the Telecommunicator is speaking with a party who was involved in the motor vehicle accident, the accident scene is safe, and the parties are willing, the Telecommunicator may then provide EMD.

8.6. Regardless of a willing caller, if the accident scene is not safe the Telecommunicators will NOT provide EMD. The safety of all involved at the accident scene is our primary concern.

9. EMD Documentation

9.1. All EMD Documentation will be kept on file by the EMD Manager. The EMD Manager will track appropriate documentation including CDE hours, Q/A review sheets, disciplinary actions, certification, recertification, and EMD suspensions/revocations.

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9.2. All the Commonwealth's and APCO required EMD program documentation will be submitted by the EMD Manager in a timely fashion to ensure that the Communications Center EMD program remains accredited and certified by the State 911 Department and APCO International.

Richard M. Fuller, Jr.
Chief of Police