GUIDELINES FOR PRIVATE AMBULANCE SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are for the reference of agencies operating or intending to operate a private ambulance service. The guidelines spell out the minimum requirements which the agency must meet when operating a private ambulance service. They cover three areas:

- Ambulance agency
- Ambulance vehicles
- Ambulance crew

Section A deals with the Guidelines for Non-emergency Ambulance Service
Section B deals with the Guidelines for Emergency Ambulance Service

23 April 98 (MOH guidelines)
SECTION A

GUIDELINES FOR NON EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE

1 Definition

1.1 A Non-Emergency Ambulance Service is one that provides ambulances for ferrying non-emergency patients eg

   a. Patients requesting for ambulance for regular outpatient clinic attendance.
   b. Patients requesting for ambulance for transport to hospital with medical problems that fulfil MOH criteria for non-emergencies (Appendix 1).
   c. Inter-hospital transfers of non-critically ill patients.
   d. Patients discharged from hospital to home.

1.2 In spite of the above, it must be remembered that such non-emergency patients may occasionally develop acute emergency problems while en-route in the ambulance.

2 Non-Emergency Ambulance Agency

2.1 The Agency that intends to provide the service must be a company or a business entity registered with the Registry of Companies & Businesses or a bona fide registered voluntary or charitable organisation.

2.2 The Agency must have the following:

   a. A qualified person (either a doctor or a nurse) employed by the Agency who sets protocols of care for patients transported and organises training and supervision for medical care provided by ambulance crew. Voluntary organisations must also provide for a qualified person to supervise the service.
   b. A programme for training and monitoring performance levels of ambulance crew and records of such performance monitoring.
   c. Acceptable scales of ambulance equipment and ambulance medical supplies (see Appendix 2).
   d. A system for activation of the ambulances of the Agency.

3 Non-Emergency Ambulance Vehicle

3.1 The ambulance vehicle shall meet the vehicle specifications set by the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

3.2 The minimum equipment in each ambulance should be as spelt out in Appendix 2. These equipment should be serviceable at all times when the ambulance is in operation.
4 Non-Emergency Ambulance Crew

4.1 Each Non-Emergency Ambulance should be staffed by at least a two member crew, one of whom is a driver, and the other the Ambulance Officer who may be either a Registered Nurse or trained Paramedic.

4.2 The Driver should have the following minimum qualifications/ experience:-

a. Possess a valid licence to drive the ambulance.

b. Understand the usage of ambulance stretchers.

c. Undergone training in Standard First Aid.

d. Trained in defensive driving and be well aware of the use of sirens and flashing lights for conveying emergency patients to hospital.

4.3 The Ambulance Officer should be able to :-

a. Measure vital signs eg pulse rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure.

b. Perform Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) and be currently certified in BCLS.

c. Use airway adjuncts such as oropharyngeal airway, nasopharyngeal airway, suction devices and basic oxygen delivery devices such as bag valve mask.

d. Use various types of stretchers and body immobilisation devices.

e. Perform basic emergency procedures such as:-
   i. Control of external bleeding
   ii. Application of dressings, bandages, slings and splints.

f. Monitor peripheral lines of stable patients.

g. Transfer and maintain patients with nasogastric tubes and urinary catheters.

h. Establish contact with a receiving hospital if the need arises.

23 April 98 (MOH guidelines)
1 Definition

1.1 An Emergency Ambulance Service is one that provides ambulance(s) for ferrying Emergency patients and provides immediate medical care from the time of arrival of the ambulance up to handing the patient over to the receiving hospital. Examples of Emergency patients are those fulfilling Ministry of Health’s criteria for classification as emergency (Appendix 3). Such patients are those either sent to Emergency Departments of various hospitals for immediate attention or those critically ill patients being transferred from one hospital to another for continuation of medical treatment.

1.2 An Emergency Ambulance Service may, in addition also, at its own choosing, attend to Non-Emergency patients or else refer these patients to any Non-emergency Ambulance Service.

2 Emergency Ambulance Agency

2.1 The Agency that intends to provide the service must be a company or a business entity registered with the Registry of Companies & Businesses or a bona fide registered voluntary or charitable organisation.

2.2 The Agency must have the following

a. A qualified person (either a doctor or a nurse) employed by the Agency who sets protocols of care for patients transported and organises training and supervision for medical care provided by the ambulance crew. Voluntary organisations must also provide for a qualified person to supervise the service

b. A system for medical despatch of the ambulances.

c. A programme for training and monitoring performance levels of ambulance crew and records of such performance monitoring.

d. Acceptable scales of ambulance equipment and ambulance medical supplies. (See Appendix 4).

3 Emergency Ambulance Vehicle

3.1 Emergency Ambulance vehicles managed by the Agency may be one or more of the following types:

a. Standard ambulance vehicles

b. Bus ambulances

c. Air ambulances
3.2 The ambulance vehicle, if land-based, shall meet the vehicle specifications for Emergency Ambulances set by the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

3.3 For 4-wheeled ambulances, the minimum equipment in each Emergency Ambulance should be as spelt out in Appendix 4. These equipment should be serviceable at all times when the ambulance is in operation.

4 Emergency Ambulance Crew

4.1 Each Emergency Ambulance should be staffed by 3 crew-members, including the Ambulance Driver. The Ambulance Officer should be a Registered Nurse or Paramedic and the Assistant Ambulance Officer should be either an Enrolled Nurse or Paramedic Technician.

4.2 The Emergency Ambulance should have ambulance crew who is able to provide simultaneous airway and circulatory management during transportation of critically ill patients.

4.3 The Driver of the Emergency Ambulance should have the following minimum qualifications/experience:

a. Possess a valid licence to drive the Emergency Ambulance.

b. Undergone training in Standard First Aid with certification.

c. Exhibit proficiency in the use of ambulance stretchers.

d. Trained in defensive driving and be well aware of the use of sirens and flashing lights for conveying emergency patients to hospital.

4.4 The Ambulance Officer must be able to

a. Evaluate the ill and injured.

b. Render basic life support and first-aid to patients with trauma emergencies.

c. Measure vital signs such as temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rates as well as level of consciousness and pupil status.

d. Perform CPR including the use of mechanical adjunctive aids such as oropharyngeal airway, nasopharyngeal airway, suction devices, and basic oxygen delivery devices.

e. Use various types of stretchers and body immobilisation devices.

f. Carry out emergency basic procedures to control external haemorrhage, apply dressings, bandages and slings and splints, provide immediate medical care to casualties during the process of extrication and disentanglement from entrapments.

g. Perform basic field triage.

h. Monitor peripheral lines of stable patients.

i. Transfer patients with nasogastric tubes, heparin plugs or Foley’s catheters.

j. Institute intravenous catheters in peripheral veins.

k. Administer intravenous glucose solution or isotonic saline or Ringer’s lactate solution.
I. Administer sublingual nitroglycerin and other oral medication as prescribed in appropriate protocols.

m. Administer gastric suction via nasogastric tube.

n. Establish contact with a receiving hospital for notification purposes.

o. Perform defibrillation and synchronised cardioversion.

p. Obtain venous samples.

q. Monitor electrocardiograms.

4.5 The other ambulance crew-member at the back of the ambulance should be able to:

a. Render basic life support and first-aid to patients with trauma emergencies.

b. Perform CPR including the use of mechanical adjunctive aids such as oropharyngeal airway, nasopharyngeal airway, suction devices, and basic oxygen delivery devices.

c. Use various types of stretchers and body immobilisation devices.

d. Carry out emergency basic procedures to control external haemorrhage, apply dressings, bandages and slings and splints, assist in the immediate medical care to casualties during the process of extrication and disentanglement from entrapments.

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### CRITERIA FOR NON-EMERGENCY

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>A non-emergency is generally an old injury or a condition which has been present for a long time. The patient does not require immediate treatment and there is no immediate threat to patient's life or limb.</th>
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| EXAMPLES of TRAUMA NON-EMERGENCY | Old scars  
Deformities of bones, limbs or spine  
Joint contractures  
Old fractures  
Request for removal of metal plates, screws  
Old unreduced dislocations  
Chronic discharging wounds  
Chronic sprains |
| EXAMPLES of NON-TRAUMA NON-EMERGENCY | Non-urgent OPERATIONS  
Cold lumps and bumps in the body  
Varicose veins  
Cyst  
Requests for circumcision  
Patching of earlobe  
Removal of tattoo  
Removal of corns, warts  
Removal of keloids  
Weakness of Body  
Cerebral palsy, spastics  
Cervical spondylosis  
Post polio  
Old hemiplegias, old strokes  
Old paraplegia  
Osteoarthritis knees  
Non-urgent Eye Conditions  
Refractive disorders of the eye, spectacles  
Pterygium  
Cataract  
Defective vision  
Squints  
Non-urgent ENT Conditions  
Chronic rhinitis  
Defective hearing  
Nasal poly  
Wax in ears  
Ill Defined Conditions  
Chronic vague symptoms like tiredness, dyspepsia  
Upper respiratory infections without fever  
Chronic cough  
Social problem- requests admission  
Psychosomatic problems  
Chronic headaches on and off  
Insomnia |
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<td>Unobstructed painless intestinal hernia</td>
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<td>Chronic liver cirrhosis</td>
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### NON-EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE

#### AMBULANCE EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

**A  VEHICLE EQUIPMENT**

1. Siren and Wail Sound Horn or Two-Tone Horn
2. Red Beacon Light
3. Fire Extinguisher
4. Street Directory
5. Bench Seat and Safety Belts
6. Water Tank and Sink
7. Frosted or Tinted Side and Rear Window Glass (excluding the front side windows)
8. Radio Network Communication or Mobile Phone or other Ambulance-Hospital Communication Equipment
9. Adequate rear (including roof mounted) warning lights

**B  MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

1. Main Stretcher with Mattress, Firm Base and Patient Restraints
2. First Aid Box (standard)/Ambulance Bag
3. Blanket
4. Trolley Sheet
5. Pillow
6. Hand Carried Stretcher
7. Wheel Chair with Restrainers
8. Receiver for Vomitus (kidney dish)
9. Bed Pan
10. Urinal
11. Pocket Mask with One-Way Valve (for CPR)
12. Bag-valve Mask
13. Vital Signs Equipment eg Blood Pressure Set and Thermometer
14. Stethoscope
15. Hand Torch
16. Portable oxygen including Spare Cylinder
17. Tubing and Mask for Oxygen
18. Portable Suction Unit
19. Detachable Drip Stand for use with Stretcher

23 April 98 – MOH guidelines)
## CRITERIA FOR EMERGENCY

### DEFINITION
An emergency is generally an injury or a condition of acute or sudden onset. This particularly refers to bleeding, severe or increasing pain or a change in the vital signs of life, like the level of consciousness or signs of difficulty in breathing. A condition that a patient is having for a long time or is currently receiving treatment may suddenly take a turn for the worse. This is also an emergency.

### EXAMPLES of TRAUMA EMERGENCY
- New or recent
- All mass casualties
- Foreign bodies
- Fractures
- Large Wounds on the body
- Burns
- Scalds
- Severe sprains
- Dislocations
- Bees and insect stings
- Snake and animal bites
- Multiple injuries
- Abrasions, superficial wounds
- Suicides
- Poisonings
- Lacerations

### EXAMPLES of NON-TRAUMA EMERGENCY
- Acute exacerbation of a chronic illness
- Acute complication of a treated case
- Acute appendicitis
- Acute myocardial infarction
- Renal colic
- Abdominal colic
- Haematuria
- Haematemesis
- Melaena
- Hyperpyrexia
- Acute Gastroenteritis
- Abscess
- Severe pain or increasing pain
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Chest pain
- Acute low backache
- Urticaria

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EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE

AMBULANCE EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

A  VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

1  Siren and Wail Sound Horn or Two Tone-Horn
2  Red Beacon Light
3  VHF Radio Network Communication or Mobile Phone or Other Ambulance-Hospital Communication Equipment
4  Fire Extinguisher
5  Street Directory
6  Bench Seat and Safety Belts
7  Attendant Seat and Safety Belts
8  Water Tank and Sink
9  Frosted or Tinted Side and Rear Window Glass (excluding the front side windows)
10 Adequate rear (including roof mounted) warning lights

B  MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

1  Main Stretcher with mattress, Firm Base and Patient Restraints
2  Spare Stretcher with Patient Restraints (optional)
3  Spinal Stretcher - Scoop or Straight Board
4  Blanket, Trolley Sheet and Pillow
5  Short Back Board/Long Backboard
6  Stiff Cervical Collars - Various sizes
7  Splints for Arms and Legs . Various Types and Lengths
8  Head Immobiliser
9  Portable Oxygen - Resuscitation and Spare Cylinders
10 Semi-Automatic Defibrillator
11 Portable Suction Unit
12 Entonox Breathing Apparatus
13 Detachable Drip Stands for use with Stretcher
14 Oxygen Bottle Clip for Stretcher
15 FirstAid Box
16 Ambulance Officer's Bag (Trauma Bag) with Various Items of Medical Supplies
17 Adult and Child Manual Bag Resuscitator Sets
18 Stethoscope
19 Vital signs Equipment eg Blood Pressure set, Thermometer and Pulse Oximeter
20 Maternity bag - Delivery kit
21 Tubing and Mask for Oxygen
22 Tubing and Mask for Ventolin Nebuliser - Adult and paediatric sets
23 IV Drip Sets & Infusion Fluid
24 Syringes and Needles
25 Hand Torch
26 Receiver for vomitus (kidney dish)
27 Bed Pan and Urinal
28 Stair Chair and Restrainers
29 Helmets (optional)
30 Raincoats(optional)

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