

General Rules of Conduct

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This section establishes the rules and regulations for the general conduct of all Department members. The purpose of this policy is to provide additional specificity to the standards of conduct embodied in the Boston EMS mission, vision, and value statements so that all members of the Department will better understand expectations pertaining to their conduct and activities while on and off duty.

The rules of conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive treatment of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on individual conduct and activities established by the Department. Rather, they are intended to (1) alert personnel to some of the more sensitive and often problematic matters involved in public safety personnel conduct and ethics; (2) specify, where possible, actions and inactions that are contrary to and that conflict with the duties and responsibilities of public emergency medical personnel, and (3) guide personnel in conducting themselves and their affairs in a manner that reflects standards of professionalism as required of public safety personnel. Additional guidance on matters of conduct is provided in regard to specific policies, procedures, and directives disseminated by the Boston Public Health Commission or Boston EMS.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Department members are directly accountable for their actions through the chain of command, to the Chief of Department and Medical Director.

Department members shall cooperate fully within the bounds of collective bargaining agreements in any internal administrative investigation conducted by this or other authorized agency and shall provide complete and accurate information in regard to any issue under investigation.

Department members shall be accurate, complete, and truthful in all matters.

Department members shall accept responsibility for their actions without attempting to conceal, divert, or mitigate their actions, nor shall they engage in efforts to thwart, influence, or interfere with an internal or criminal investigation.

Department members who are arrested, indicted, or summonsed to court for any criminal offense shall report this fact to a Shift Commander and Professional Standards as soon as possible.

EMTs shall file a written report with Professional Standards within five days of notice of proposed OEMS disciplinary action or final OEMS action against the EMT's or EFR's certification (letter of reprimand, denial, suspension, revocation or refusal to renew certification) or other OEMS response to identified deficiency (cease and desist order, letter of clinical deficiency, notice of serious deficiency, advisory letter) against the EMT or EFR.

Additionally, in accordance with 105 CMR 170.937, EMT personnel are required to file a written report with Boston EMS Professional Standards and with OEMS within five days of the following:

1. The EMT's or EFR's conviction of a misdemeanor or felony in Massachusetts or any other state, the United States, or a foreign country (including a guilty plea, nolo contendere or admission to sufficient facts), other than a minor traffic violation for which less than \$1,000 was assessed. The following traffic violations are not minor and must be reported: conviction for driving under the influence, reckless driving, driving to endanger, and motor vehicle homicide;
2. Loss or suspension of the EMT's or EFR's driver's license;
3. Disciplinary action taken by another governmental licensing jurisdiction (state, United States or foreign) or the NREMT, against an EMT or other health care certification or license held by an EMT or EFR;
4. Suspension or revocation of authorization to practice by the EMT's or EFR's affiliate hospital medical director.

KNOWLEDGE OF RULES

All members are required to have a good knowledge of all applicable rules, regulations, duties, procedures, and responsibilities contained in this manual or in any authorized written directives. All members shall have a good knowledge of all duties, responsibilities, and protocols commensurate with their position and level of training.

REPORTING FOR DUTY

Employees shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment or orders, and they shall be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties. Employees shall be properly equipped and cognizant of information required for the proper performance and assumption of their duties.

OFFICIAL WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Written policies and procedures are subject to review and modification by State regulation, or administrative need. Professional Standards will be responsible for adding new and revised policies and procedures to the Department manual as these are issued. The Policy and Procedure manual will be available to all department members.

FOLLOWING ORDERS OF SUPERVISORY OFFICERS

Orders from a superior to a subordinate shall be in clear, understandable language, civil in tone, and issued pursuant to Department business. No Supervisor shall knowingly issue any order that is in violation of any law, ordinance, or department policy or procedure. Members functioning in an "Acting Capacity" shall be afforded the same respect, courtesy and obedience as members of official higher rank. All lawful orders of supervisory personnel, verbal or written, shall be followed promptly even when such orders are relayed via a Department member of equal or lesser rank as the recipient.

If a member receives an order that is in conflict with a prior order, he or she should respectfully advise the issuing supervisor of the previous order. If directed to do so, the member should follow the new order, but may pursue clarification at a later time.

AUTHORITY OF EMS COMMUNICATION CENTER

All dispatch orders transmitted by the Dispatch Operations Center to ambulance crews shall be acknowledged and executed promptly. Ambulance crews unable to respond to an incident or assignment promptly shall notify the Dispatcher.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Members who are directed to submit an Incident Report shall complete such report by the end of the work shift, or by the due date given. The Incident Report shall be written on the appropriate Departmental form or submitted electronically via the Department e-mail system and shall specifically and truthfully address the incident being reviewed or any request made by a superior officer. Only known facts and relevant observations shall be presented on Incident Reports. Failure to write an Incident Report, the submission of an incomplete report, or submission of false and/or misleading statements shall be considered grounds for discipline. The EMS Supervisor receiving the report shall ensure the report is legible and complete, sign it, and promptly route the report through the chain of Command to the appropriate area.

CURRENT ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

All members shall provide a current home address and telephone number to the Administrative Headquarters. Upon change of address or telephone number, notification shall be given in writing or by telephone to Professional Standards within five business days.

IDENTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

Members shall carry Department identification while on duty. Members whose job description requires clinical certification, CPR, or ACLS certification shall carry a current clinical certification commensurate with level of training and a current CPR and ACLS certification card as required while on duty. Members who do not possess the required certifications may be relieved of duty.

MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE

All members shall carry and furnish upon request a current and valid motor vehicle operator's license while on duty. Additionally, a copy of a current and valid motor vehicle operator's license must be kept on file with the Office of the Superintendent in Chief.

Any member who does not possess a valid and/or current driver's license shall notify the Shift Commander immediately upon receiving knowledge that the license is expired or revoked. The member may be relieved of duty. Members shall not operate any Department motor vehicle unless duly licensed to operate such vehicle classification. Any member who knowingly operates a Department motor vehicle without a current and valid license may be relieved of duty pending an administrative hearing.

FITNESS FOR DUTY

Members are expected to keep themselves in a physical, mental, and emotional condition as required to safely, properly, and effectively perform their duties and responsibilities.

An on-duty member who is physically, mentally, or emotionally unable to perform his or her duties shall inform a Supervisor immediately. The supervisor shall inform the Shift Commander and may send the member to a medical facility for evaluation and referral. If necessary, the Department shall provide transportation to the medical facility. Any member relieved of duty for mental or physical reasons will be required to provide satisfactory documentation of fitness for duty before returning to duty. A member who is aware that another on-duty member is unfit for duty shall notify a Supervisor immediately.

DECORUM

Members shall treat coworkers, supervisory officers and subordinates with respect and dignity. A dispute between fellow workers shall be referred to the immediate Supervisor who shall attempt to settle the dispute. If the Supervisor is unable to settle the dispute, he/she shall refer the matter in writing through the chain of command. Irreconcilable differences may result in the reassignment of one or both members.

Members shall be courteous and respectful to the general public and to members of other agencies. Any dispute between a member of EMS and a member of another agency shall be referred to an immediate Supervisor as soon as possible. The Supervisor shall obtain all the relevant facts of the incident and submit a written report through the chain of command.

Department members shall treat all patients with respect, compassion and courtesy, guard against employing an overbearing attitude or language that may belittle, ridicule, or intimidate the individual, or act in a manner that unnecessarily delays the performance of their duty.

While recognizing the occasional need to demonstrate control over violent patients, department personnel shall adhere to the Department's restraint policy and shall protect the well-being of those in their charge.

Whenever a member of the public requests the name of an EMT, the EMT shall state his name or her badge number in a courteous manner.

An EMT alleging mistreatment from a member of the public shall immediately notify the appropriate Field or Dispatch Operations Supervisor who shall conduct a preliminary investigation and send the complaint and preliminary report in writing through the chain of command. If an EMT is physically assaulted by a member of the public, an EMS Field Supervisor and the appropriate police agency shall be dispatched to the scene. Any member who files a criminal/civil complaint regarding an on duty incident shall notify his/her immediate Supervisor, who shall prepare a report describing the situation and send this report through the chain of command to Professional Standards.

USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Department members shall not consume any intoxicating beverage while on duty or in uniform. No alcoholic beverage shall be served or consumed at an EMS satellite station or in a Boston EMS vehicle.

No member shall report to work or be on duty when alcohol, medication, or other substances have impaired his or her judgment or physical condition.

USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

While on duty, department members shall not use an [e-cigarette](#) or tobacco product unless in a designated smoking area and when not conducting EMS related functions. Additionally, personnel are not permitted to use tobacco products in a Department vehicle or in an EMS facility.

ABUSE OF POSITION

Department members shall not solicit any gifts, gratuities, or other items of value in exchange for performing their duties. In addition, members may not accept unsolicited gifts, gratuities, or other items of value in the course of their employment where the value exceeds \$50. If a gift, gratuity, or item is received and its value exceeds \$50, that member shall promptly report in writing the circumstances of such gift to Professional Standards.

Department members shall not use their authority or position for financial gain, for obtaining or granting privileges or favors not otherwise available to them or others except as a private citizen.

Department members shall not purchase, convert to their own use, or have any claim to any found, impounded, abandoned, or recovered property.

Department members shall not solicit nor accept contributions for this agency without the express consent of the Executive Director of the Public Health Commission, or the Chief of Department.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND APPEARANCES

Department members shall not divulge, or willfully permit to have divulged, any information gained by reason of their position, for anything other than its official, authorized purpose.

Unless expressly authorized, Department members shall not make any statements, speeches, or appearances that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of this agency.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Department members shall be guided by state law regarding their participation and involvement in political activities. M.G.L. Chapter 55, the Campaign Finance Law, regulates political activity by public employees and the use of public buildings and resources in campaigns. Public employees who take part in political campaigns and the candidates and committees they support should be aware of these sections of the law.

Section 13: Public Employees.

No person employed for compensation by the Commonwealth, its cities, towns and counties, public agencies, other than an elected official, may directly or indirectly solicit or receive a contribution or anything of value for any political purpose.

A public employee may not:

- Sell tickets to a political fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect contributions in any manner, such as by phone or mail.
- Serve as treasurer of a political committee
- Allow his name to be used in a solicitation letter or fundraising phone call
- Help identify people to be targeted for political fundraising.

A public employee may:

- Run for office (provided a committee is organized on his behalf if he plans to raise any money).
- Contribute to candidates and attend fundraisers.
- Work for campaigns and committees in a non-fundraising capacity, such as holding signs, stuffing envelopes, hosting coffees or other informational meetings, or being a member of a committee.

Section 14: Public Buildings

Soliciting or receiving campaign contributions in a public (government) building is prohibited. Examples include City or town hall, office buildings, public schools and libraries, police and fire stations and public works garages. No one (not just public employees) may:

- Sell tickets to a fundraiser or otherwise solicit or collect political contributions in a public building.
- Use a public building as the site of a fundraiser, the return address for contributions or the contact phone number for buying tickets to a fundraiser.
- Post in a public building any advertisements for a fundraiser.

USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Campaign finance law prohibits the use of public resources for political campaign purposes, such as influencing the nomination or election of a candidate or the passage or defeat of a ballot question. "Public Resources" encompass just about anything that is paid for by the taxpayers, such as vehicles, office equipment and supplies, buildings, and the paid time of public employees. For example, a public employee may not, during his work day, render campaign service to a candidate or work in favor of or against a ballot question.

Where state law is silent on this issue, members shall be guided by the following examples of prohibited political activities during working hours, while in uniform, or otherwise serving as a representative of this agency:

- Placing or affixing any campaign literature on city or commission-owned property;
- Soliciting political funds from any member of this agency or another governmental agency of this jurisdiction;
- Soliciting contributions, signatures, or other forms of support for political candidates, parties, or ballot measures on Department property;
- Using official authority to interfere with any election or interfere with the political actions of other employees or the general public;

- Favoring or discriminating against any person seeking employment because of political opinions or affiliations;
- Participating in any type of political activity while in uniform unless authorized by the Chief of Department or designee.

EXPECTATIONS OF PRIVACY

Department members shall not store personal information or belongings with an expectation of personal privacy in such places as lockers, desks, departmentally owned vehicles, file cabinets, computers, or similar areas that are under the control and management of this agency. While Boston EMS recognizes the need for personnel to occasionally store personal items in such areas, Department members should be aware that these and similar places may be inspected or otherwise entered-- to meet operational needs, internal investigatory requirements, or for other reasons--at the direction of Chief of Department or designee.

DISTRICT STATIONS

Members assigned to a station in facilities provided by other City agencies, by public or private health facilities, by allied public safety agencies, or by any other agency shall follow the rules of conduct within the facilities set forth by the managing entity and Boston EMS.

The security and maintenance of the District Stations are the responsibility of the crew members on duty. No other personnel may enter or utilize these stations without proper authorization.

Members regularly assigned to a District Station may enter the Station to obtain personal and/or assigned Department equipment as needed while off-duty.

District Stations shall be kept in a clean and orderly condition as time permits.

Offensive, defamatory, derogatory, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive materials are prohibited at District Stations or any area maintained by Boston EMS.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

The following items shall **NOT** be carried while on duty or in uniform: Any firearm; A blackjack or similar instrument; Mace; A spring-loaded baton device; a flashlight longer than thirteen (13) inches or with a capacity to hold more than 6 "C" batteries or 5 "D" batteries; a knife with a double-edge blade or illegal length; any device which by appearance or by design may be considered as an offensive weapon.

RESTRAINTS

No device or equipment used for the restraint of a patient shall be carried on duty or in uniform unless expressly authorized in the Department's Patient Restraint Policy.

INSPECTION AUTHORITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DPH

Inspectors from the Department of Public Health Office of Emergency Medical Services may visit and inspect at any time the following areas:

- The main ambulance garage and all other EMS garages and stations;
- Any area designated for the storage and maintenance of linen, equipment, and supplies;

- All records, including employee application forms, accident reports, trip sheets, tapes, incident reports, information relating to complaints, and documentation of current certifications.
- Any ambulance may be inspected with or without prior notice.

If an Inspector arrives without prior notice, members shall courteously request identification of the Inspector and notify the Dispatch Operations Supervisor that the ambulance is being inspected. The Communications Supervisor shall immediately notify the Shift Commander.

SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDEN ACTS

The following acts or situations are specifically forbidden and shall cause disciplinary action to be taken:

- Transmitting false or erroneous information by radio, particularly locations or status of personnel and/or units;
- Negligence in patient care as defined by protocols and/or the standard of care;
- Willful or overt neglect of duties and responsibilities;
- Theft, destruction, or neglect of city property, or negligence while operating a Department motor vehicle;
- Theft or destruction of the property of another person while on duty or in uniform or on property owned or used by the Department;
- Deliberate falsification of a patient care report (trip sheet), an Incident Report, a Motor Vehicle Accident Report, an Industrial Accident Report, a computer-input device, required certification, medical documentation supporting sick time use, or any other Department records, reports or application forms;
- Willful or overt disregard of Department rules and regulations;
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, harassing, or fighting with another member of the Department, a first responder, a member of a private ambulance company, or a member of the public while on duty, or in uniform, or on property owned or used by the Department;
- Smoking or chewing tobacco in a Department vehicle, in a facility owned or used by the Department, while assigned to an incident, or while in the performance of duties;
- Unauthorized response to an incident and/or unauthorized movement or relocation of a response unit from an assigned location;
- Leaving an assigned duty post without first being properly relieved;
- Being employed in a second job during regular hours of employment; in any business while on sick leave, or being employed in any other business while on injured leave without notifying the Office of the Superintendent in Chief and Worker's Compensation;
- Engaging in or soliciting a strike, sabotage, a work slowdown or other illegal job action;
- Engaging in or soliciting sexual activity while on duty or in uniform or on property owned or used by the Department;
- Engaging in or soliciting sexual activity with a patient while on or off duty;
- Failure to dispatch an available appropriate ambulance to a medical emergency without delay;
- Failure to respond without delay to a call when dispatched by radio or telephone;

- Derogatory, or otherwise inappropriate verbal responses to orders or radio messages;
- Failure to honor a subpoena or summons relating to Departmental business; Absence from duty without notification to the Dispatch Operations Supervisor; if assigned to administrative or light duty, absence from duty without notification to a supervisor;
- Absence from duty without authorization; Abandonment of duty;
- Failure to supervise if so authorized or empowered

The following acts require the prior authorization of a member of the Command Staff. Committing these acts without prior authorization shall be cause for progressive discipline:

- Allowing a person to ride as an observer in an ambulance or other Department vehicle;
- Speaking to the media about matters related to the Department while on duty or in uniform;

Reference: MGL Chapter 268A:Conflict of Interest Law; MGL Chapter 55 Campaign Finance Law.