

Mutual Aid Requests

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INTRODUCTION

Boston EMS recognizes that on occasion, circumstances may develop that severely limits available public safety resources in Boston or neighboring communities. Under these circumstances, Boston EMS may be asked to provide mutual aid assistance to another agency, or may request assistance from other agencies. Mutual Aid refers to the organized, coordinated, and cooperative response of emergency medical services personnel and equipment to a request for assistance in an emergency when local resources have been expended. The response is predicated upon agreements among participating agencies or jurisdictions

EXISTING AGREEMENTS

The Metro-Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR) includes the City of Boston and the surrounding cities and towns of Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop. The primary EMS providers in each of these jurisdictions (Boston EMS, Fallon, Cataldo, and Professional) are committed to a system of ongoing and open communications, planning, and prevention strategy development. The MBHSR EMS providers are also committed to a mutual aid system of providing response to any member community that requests EMS assistance, as evidenced by the standardized regional MCI Response plan.

Boston EMS has also entered into agreements with the primary EMS providers of other contiguous communities not within the federally designated MBHSR area (such as Dedham, Newton and Milton), and several private ambulance services normally operating in and around the City of Boston EMS Service Zone. These agreements are in accordance with 105 CMR 170.385(A)(3)(a) and (b) to provide, through mutual cooperation, a pre-determined plan by which each might render aid to the other in case of an emergency which demands emergency ambulance services to a degree beyond the existing capability of the requesting party. (A complete list of agencies with which Boston EMS maintains Back-up / Service Zone agreements is maintained in the Boston EMS Service Zone Plan.)

COMMUNICATIONS

The Boston EMS Ambulance mutual aid (BAMA) channel is engineered to afford inter-dispatch center communication between Boston Emergency Medical Services and its backup providers. A UHF multi-site conventional network operating narrow band with analog and encrypted digital communication, it is currently comprised of one UHF radio channel designed for portable in-street coverage within the City of Boston. The BAMA network will be used to request mutual aid assistance and coordinate the response of additional medical resources. Pending future funding, coverage will be extended to the

other eight cities and towns within the Metro-Boston Homeland Security Region (MBHSR). The expanded system would adhere to a design strategy that will afford compatibility across other boundaries and future interoperability with State and Federal systems.

REQUESTING MUTUAL AID: BLS

1. Private ambulance services with a valid mutual aid agreement in place may be requested to respond to a pending incident whenever an appropriate BEMS unit is unavailable, or in the case of an incident in which the patient is requesting transport for a non-emergency situation (clinic appointment or direct admission), or transportation to a hospital other than the closest appropriate facility.
2. When a private ambulance is contacted and has a BLS ambulance available, an ETA for their response should be obtained and supplemented into the CAD incident text. The dispatcher will announce on TAC-1 the name of the ambulance service, the incident address, and TYPE Code of the incident. The unit will be logged on in CAD and all status changes (dispatch, on scene, en route hospital, etc) shall be noted.

REQUESTING MUTUAL AID: ALS

1. Massachusetts OEMS regulations (105 CMR 170.305) require that an ambulance transporting a patient at the Paramedic level of ALS be staffed with a minimum of two EMTs, both of whom are certified as the EMT-Paramedic level unless certain requirements are met. The medical director of Boston EMS has determined that two paramedics are required to provide appropriate assessment and treatment of patients requiring prehospital advanced life support, therefore Boston EMS calls determined to require an ALS response will only be referred to private ambulance services with valid mutual aid agreements meeting the dual paramedic staffing configuration.
2. Private ALS (dual paramedic) response should be initiated when a Boston EMS Paramedic unit is not available, and:
 - report of a cardiac arrest (CARST) or entrapped patient (TRAUMA), or
 - upon request for ALS from an on scene Boston EMS unit, or
 - ALS TYPE Code incident at a health center or clinic where the patient is already being treated by medical personnel, or
 - at the discretion of a supervisor or command staff member.
3. When a private ambulance service having a valid mutual aid agreement is contacted and has an ALS unit with dual paramedic staffing configuration available, an ETA for their response should be obtained and supplemented into the CAD incident text. The dispatcher will announce on TAC-1 the name of the ambulance service, the incident address, and TYPE Code of the incident. The unit will be logged on in CAD and all status changes (dispatch, on scene, en route hospital, etc) shall be noted.
4. Patient Transport:

If the responding private ALS unit is a non-transporting unit, the patient will be transported in the Boston EMS ambulance driven by Boston EMS personnel.

If the responding private ALS unit is a patient transport vehicle, the patient will be transported in the private ambulance whenever possible.

BEMS REQUESTED OUTSIDE OF CITY

1. The Dispatch Operations Supervisor shall be immediately notified whenever Boston EMS is contacted by another agency requesting a mutual aid response outside of the City of Boston. The Supervisor shall quickly review the request and make a determination as to the location, nature of the incident (ALS vs. BLS), BEMS system call load, and availability of appropriate Boston EMS units.
 - 1.1. If an appropriate BEMS unit is not available to respond, the agency requesting back-up shall be so advised.
 - 1.2. If appropriate BEMS resources are available, the Dispatch Operations Supervisor may authorize the initial dispatch of a BEMS ALS and / or a BLS unit to a community within the Metro-Boston Urban Security Region (Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, or Winthrop), or to the neighboring towns of Dedham, Milton or Newton.
 - 1.3. If available, a BEMS Field Supervisor should also respond whenever a BEMS unit is dispatched out of the City pursuant to a mutual aid request.
2. The Shift Commander shall be promptly notified of all requests for mutual aid outside of the City. A notification shall also be made via the Department's paging system to the <C1-C5> group page.
3. A Shift Commander (or above) must authorize the initial dispatch of any BEMS resources to a non-contiguous / non- MBHSR community, or the dispatch of any BEMS resources (including personnel, vehicles, Special Operations assets, or other specialized equipment) in addition to those previously authorized in section 1.2.
4. BEMS Personnel operating in another community as part of a mutual aid request shall follow all applicable treatment protocols and procedures. All patient care activities shall be documented appropriately, and arrangements will be made to deliver a copy of the PCR to facilities not equipped to accept BEMS electronic patient care reports.