Government of the District of Columbia

Department:	***Department of Health***
Administration:	***Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration***
Section:	***Emergency Medical Services***
Policy Name:	***Emergency Medical Services Provider Scope of Practice***
Policy Number:	***2010-0009***
Effective Date:	***15 November 2010***
Approved By:	***Beverly A. Pritchett, Senior Deputy Director, HEPRA***
Applies To:	***All DC EMS Providers***
Purpose:	***Emergency Medical Services Provider Scope of Practice***
Reference:	***Emergency Medical Services Act of 2008, Section 24***
Revision:	***Original***

Introduction

The District of Columbia Scope of Practice for Emergency Medical Service Providers defines and describes five levels of EMS Certification:

- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT)
- Emergency Medical Technician – Intermediate (EMT-I)
- Paramedic

The scope of practice outlined here is based on the National Scope of Practice Model developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and is required under the EMS Act of 2008, Section 24.

Scope of Practice: Emergency Medical Responder

The primary focus of the Emergency Medical Responder is to initiate immediate lifesaving care to critical patients who access the emergency medical system. This individual possesses the basic knowledge and skills necessary to provide lifesaving interventions while awaiting additional EMS response and to assist higher level personnel at the scene and during transport.

Educational Requirements
The candidate must successfully complete a certified Emergency Medical Responder training program in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *National Emergency Medical Services Educational Standards*. Additionally the candidate must successfully pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician written and practical examination.

Description of the Profession
The Emergency Medical Responder's scope of practice includes simple, non-invasive interventions to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with acute out-of-hospital medical and traumatic emergencies. Emergency care is based on assessment findings.

After initiating care, the Emergency Medical Responder transfers care to higher level personnel. Emergency Medical Responders are not to serve as primary members of an ambulance transport team. In the event of an unintended emergency transport they must function with an EMT or higher level personnel during the transportation of emergency patients.

Psychomotor Skills
The following are the minimum psychomotor skills of the EMR:

- Airway and Breathing
  - Insertion of airway adjuncts intended to go into the oropharynx
  - Use of positive pressure ventilation devices such as the bag-valve-mask
  - Suction of the upper airway
  - Supplemental oxygen therapy
- Pharmacological interventions
  - Use of unit dose auto-injectors for the administration of life saving medications intended for self or peer rescue in hazardous materials situations (MARK I, etc.)
- Medical/Cardiac Care
  - Use of an automated external defibrillator
  - Assisted delivery (childbirth)
  - Eye irrigation
  - Manual blood pressure
- Trauma Care
  - Manual stabilization of suspected cervical spine injuries
  - Manual stabilization of extremity fractures
  - Bleeding control
  - Emergency moves

Scope of Practice: Emergency Medical Technician

The primary focus of the Emergency Medical Technician is to provide basic emergency medical care and transportation for critical and emergent patients who access the emergency medical system. This individual possesses the basic knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and transportation.

Educational Requirements
The candidate must successfully complete a certified Emergency Medical Technician training program in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *National Emergency Medical Services Educational Standards*. Additionally the candidate must successfully pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician written and practical examination.

Description of the Profession
The Emergency Medical Technician's scope of practice includes basic skills focused on the acute management and transportation of critical and emergent patients. It includes basic, non-invasive interventions to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with acute out-of-hospital medical and traumatic emergencies. Emergency care is based on assessment findings. Emergency Medical Technicians provide care to minimize secondary injury and provide comfort to the patient and family while transporting the patient to an emergency care facility.

The Emergency Medical Technician level is the minimum certification level for personnel transporting patients in ambulances. The scope of practice is limited to basic skills that are effective and can be performed safely in an out-of-hospital setting with medical oversight and limited training. A major difference between the Emergency Medical Responder and the Emergency Medical Technician is the knowledge and skills necessary to provide medical transportation of emergency patients.

The Emergency Medical Technician can transport patients to an appropriate medical facility. The Emergency Medical Technician is not prepared to make decisions independently regarding the appropriate disposition of patients. The Emergency Medical Technician may make transport destination decisions in collaboration with medical oversight.

Psychomotor Skills

The following are the minimum psychomotor skills of the EMT:

- Airway and Breathing
  - Insertion of airway adjuncts intended to go into the oropharynx or nasopharynx
  - Use of positive pressure ventilation devices such as manually triggered ventilators and automatic transport ventilators
  - Perform pulse oximetry
- Pharmacological Interventions
  - Assist patients in taking their own prescribed medications
    - Aerosolized/Nebulized
  - Administer sublingual nitroglycerine to a patient experiencing chest pain of suspected ischemic origin
  - Administration of the following over-the-counter medications with appropriate medical oversight:
    - Oral glucose for suspected hypoglycemia
    - Aspirin for chest pain of suspected ischemic origin
- Medical/Cardiac Care
  - Mechanical CPR device
  - Assisted complicated delivery (childbirth)
  - Blood pressure (automated)
- Trauma Care
  - Spinal immobilization, from both the supine and seated position, including the use of adjuncts
  - Rapid manual extrication
  - Extremity splinting
  - Traction splinting
  - Mechanical patient restraint

Scope of Practice: Advanced Emergency Medical Technician

The primary focus of the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician is to provide basic and limited advanced emergency medical care and transportation for critical and emergent patients who access the emergency medical system. This individual possesses the basic knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and transportation.

Educational Requirements
The candidate must successfully complete a certified Advanced Emergency Medical Technician training program in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *National Emergency Medical Services Educational Standards*. Additionally the candidate must successfully pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician written and practical examination.

Description of the Profession
The Advanced Emergency Medical Technician's scope of practice includes basic and limited advanced skills focused on the acute management and transportation of critical and emergent patients. It includes basic, limited advanced and pharmacological interventions to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with acute out-of-hospital medical and traumatic emergencies. Emergency care is based on assessment findings. Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians provide care to minimize secondary injury and provide comfort to the patient and family while transporting the patient to an emergency care facility.

The Advanced Emergency Medical Technician can transport patients to an appropriate medical facility. The Advanced Emergency Medical Technician is not prepared to independently make decisions regarding the disposition of patients. The Advanced Emergency Medical Technician may make destination decisions in collaboration with medical oversight.

Psychomotor Skills
The following are the minimum psychomotor skills of the AEMT:

- Airway and Breathing
  - Insertion of esophageal airways
  - Insertion of supraglotic airways
  - Tracheobronchial suctioning of an already intubated patient
- Pharmacological Interventions
  - Establish and maintain peripheral intravenous access
  - Establish and maintain intraosseous access
  - Administer (nonmedicated) intravenous fluid therapy
  - Administer subcutaneous or intramuscular epinephrine to a patient in anaphylaxis
  - Administer intramuscular glucagon to a hypoglycemic patient
  - Administer intravenous D50 to a hypoglycemic patient
  - Administer inhaled beta agonists to a patient experiencing difficulty breathing and wheezing
  - Administer an intravenous narcotic antagonist to a patient suspected of narcotic overdose
- Medical/Cardiac Care
  - Blood glucose monitoring

Scope of Practice: EMT-Intermediate and Paramedic

The Paramedic is an allied health professional whose primary focus is to provide advanced emergency medical care for critical and emergent patients who access the emergency medical system. This individual possesses the complex knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and transportation.

Educational Requirements
The EMT-Intermediate candidate must successfully complete a certified Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate training program in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *National Standard Curriculum.* The Paramedic candidate must successfully complete a certified Paramedic training program in accordance with the Department of Transportation's *National Emergency Medical Services Educational Standards*. Additionally the candidate must successfully pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician written and practical examination.

Description of the Profession
The Paramedic's scope of practice includes basic and advanced skills focused on the acute management and transportation of the broad range of patients who access the emergency medical system. Paramedics represent the highest level of out-of-hospital care.

The Paramedic's scope of practice includes invasive and pharmacological interventions to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with acute out-of-hospital medical and traumatic emergencies. Emergency care is based on an advanced assessment and the formulation of a field impression. The Paramedic has the knowledge associated with, and is expected to be competent in, all of the skills of the EMR, EMT and AEMT.

The Paramedic has knowledge, skills, and abilities developed by appropriate formal education and training. These skills carry a greater risk for the patient if improperly or inappropriately performed, are more difficult to attain and maintain competency in, and require significant background knowledge in basic and applied sciences.

The Paramedic is the minimum certification level for patients requiring the full range of advanced out-of-hospital care. The scope of practice is limited to advanced skills that are effective and can be performed safely in an out-of-hospital setting with medical oversight. The Paramedic can transport patients to an appropriate medical facility. The Paramedic may make destination decisions in collaboration with medical oversight.

Psychomotor Skills
The following are the minimum psychomotor skills of the Paramedic:

- Airway and Breathing
  - Perform endotracheal intubation
  - Perform nasotracheal intubation
  - Perform percutaneous and needle cricothyrotomy
  - Perform CPAP/BiPAP
  - Perform therapeutic PEEP
  - Perform end tidal CO2 monitoring/capnography
  - Decompress the pleural space
- Pharmacological Interventions
  - Enteral and parenteral administration of approved prescription medications
  - Administer medications by IV infusion
  - Access indwelling catheters and implanted central IV ports for fluid and medication administration
- Medical/Cardiac Care
  - Perform single lead interpretive cardiac monitoring
  - Perform multi-lead interpretive cardiac monitoring
  - Perform electrical cardioversion
  - Perform transcutaneous cardiac pacing
  - Venous blood sampling

Immunization Authority: Advanced Life Support Providers
At the discretion and under the direction of the Director of the Department of Health, advanced life support EMS provider levels are authorized to administer immunization injections to accomplish population-based, Department of Health approved, immunization programs.

Authority to Practice: All EMS Providers
EMS personnel may only provide emergency medical care while acting under the authority of the organization's medical director for the EMS organization for which they are affiliated and within the scope of the EMS organization's District certification.

The EMS organization's medical director may submit a request to the Department of Health for providers to exceed the current District of Columbia scope of practice.