

**Lee County Emergency Medical Services**  
**Handbook**  
**Supplement to Lee County Personnel Policy**



Revised: April 2024

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This Handbook was developed by County management personnel, including elected officials and appointed administrators. The policies described in this Handbook are presented as a matter of information only. While the County believes wholeheartedly in the plans, policies and procedures described here, they are not conditions of employment. The statements contained in this Handbook are subject to change and may be revised from time to time, without prior notice, by Lee County EMS Administration and/or the Board of Supervisors. Any suggestions you may have for changes in the policies explained in the Handbook are welcome.

This supplement is intended to cover the following Lee County EMS employees:

Full Time, Part Time, Temporary Employment:

Paramedic

EMS Captain

Emergency Medical Technicians

Advanced Emergency Medical Technician

## Lee County Emergency Medical Services Supplement to Lee County Personnel Policy

Welcome to Lee County, and Lee County Emergency Medical Services (Lee County EMS)

We are happy to welcome you as an employee of Lee County, and specifically, the Lee County EMS. (Hereinafter referred to as the “Ambulance Service”.) Our organization is devoted to helping others and we need caring and compassionate team members to further our mission of service. We want you to feel that your association with the Ambulance Service will be beneficial to both you and the organization.

You have joined an organization that has a mission of developing an outstanding reputation for high quality patient care and medical transportation services. Striving to meet this mission is a responsibility of all of our employees. We hope you will find satisfaction and take pride in the organization and your involvement here.

***The Lee County Personnel Policy to which this handbook is appended, will each provide answers to many of the questions you may have about your employment. This includes our responsibilities to you as well as your responsibilities to Lee County and Lee County EMS. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the Director. If there is ever deemed to be an inconsistency between the Lee County Personnel Policy and the terms of this Handbook, the terms of this Handbook shall be deemed to govern.***

You are responsible for reading and understanding the Personnel Policy, this Handbook, and referenced policies. Your performance evaluations may reflect your adherence to our Policies, including those outlined herein. You will also be asked to acknowledge your receipt of this Handbook. Please complete and return the acknowledgment to the Director as soon as possible. In addition to clarifying responsibilities, we hope the Personnel Policy and this Handbook gives you an indication of the Ambulance Service’s interest in the welfare of all employees.

While the Ambulance Service requires your adherence to the Lee County Personnel Policy, this handbook, and referenced policies, these documents are not an express or implied “contract” or guarantee of continued employment or membership in the organization. Management has the right, except when prohibited by law, in its sole discretion, to change, modify, delete, or revise the contents of the Personnel Policy, this Handbook and/or related policies at any time, for any reason with or without notice. To the extent that there is a conflict between the Lee County Personnel Policy, this Handbook, and referenced policies with any Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) that may be in place within the organization, the terms of the CBA shall govern.

Compensation and personal satisfaction gained from helping others and in a job well done are only some of the reasons people work or volunteer for the Ambulance Service. Other factors that count among the reasons people work for the Ambulance Service include pleasant relationships, good working conditions, the chance to help the community, career development, and promotion opportunities. The Ambulance Service is committed to working with you to ensure that your experience as a member of this service is a positive one.

We extend to you our best wishes for your success at Lee County EMS!

## **Introduction to this Ambulance Service Handbook**

As a new employee, you will be going through a period of adjustment. You may have questions about the Ambulance Service, such as your day-to-day duties, benefits, and what you can expect from us and what we can expect from you. This Handbook has been prepared as a guide to answer many of your questions. Please read the Handbook carefully and keep it close, as it will be a valuable reference tool during your employment.

If you cannot find an answer to a question in the Handbook you should take that question to your supervisor or any member of management. Many of the policies included in this Handbook reference other policies within our organization. You are encouraged to review and familiarize yourself with all organization policies.

The County and/or the Ambulance Service may amend by addition or deletion the contents of this Handbook. When this occurs, you will receive updates as soon as possible. Nothing contained in this Handbook is to be considered an employment contract, and any employment relationship is deemed to be at the will of either the organization or you as an employee.

### **Expectations**

The successful operation of the Ambulance Service depends on the professionalism, courtesy, and competency of all employees. It is our intent to rely on the best employees to fulfill our mission of public service. In return for your contribution to the success of the Ambulance Service we will make a concerted effort to provide you with a meaningful and rewarding experience. You can further expect respect for your individual rights, honest and fair treatment by management, high quality equipment, a safe and pleasant work environment, and conditions that are consistent with state-of-the-art EMS organizations.

At all times, we expect high quality performance along with cooperation and respect for the patient, the public, fellow employees, and management. Professional appearance and behavior are crucial to our success and all employees are expected to be courteous, loyal, honest, and to respect and comply with the Ambulance Service rules, regulations, and policies. The strength of our Ambulance Service is its employees, and we invite you to provide input and suggestions for the continued enhancement of the Service.

We are a “people” business. That means we all must do our very best to effectively communicate with others, especially the patients who rely on our service. Most of the calls we respond to do not involve “life or death” situations. The most frequent attribute you will need to rely upon is your interpersonal communication skills and your compassion for others. Many of our patients will be elderly and may need the emotional and psychological support that comes from a caring attitude. We expect that all patients will be treated with the utmost dignity. Please remember our overriding philosophy – treat others in the same way that you would want to be treated. If you follow this simple philosophy in every encounter with a patient, family member, the public, or fellow employees, you will feel good about yourself and the service you provide, and you will enhance our position and reputation in the department and the community.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Ambulance Service is to provide outstanding, high quality prehospital medicine and patient transportation services. We will provide these services in a professional manner while maintaining the dignity of those we serve. Our employees will continuously endeavor to learn, improve, and grow in their skill sets, to enhance the delivery of prehospital medicine to those we serve.

## **Value Statement**

### **Commitment to Service**

We treat all people with illness and injury in our community with care and compassion, utilizing effective principles and practices of patient care, and we strive for excellence through ongoing evaluation and improvement.

### **Respect**

We recognize the dignity of others and communicate with others in a respectful manner.

### **Integrity**

We serve with honesty, loyalty, and dedication.

### **Accountability**

We are responsible for our actions, both positive and negative.

### **Teamwork**

We practice teamwork through communication and cooperation to achieve common goals.

### **Fair Treatment**

We do not discriminate against patients or employees on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other legally protected characteristic.

## **The Role of the Ambulance Director**

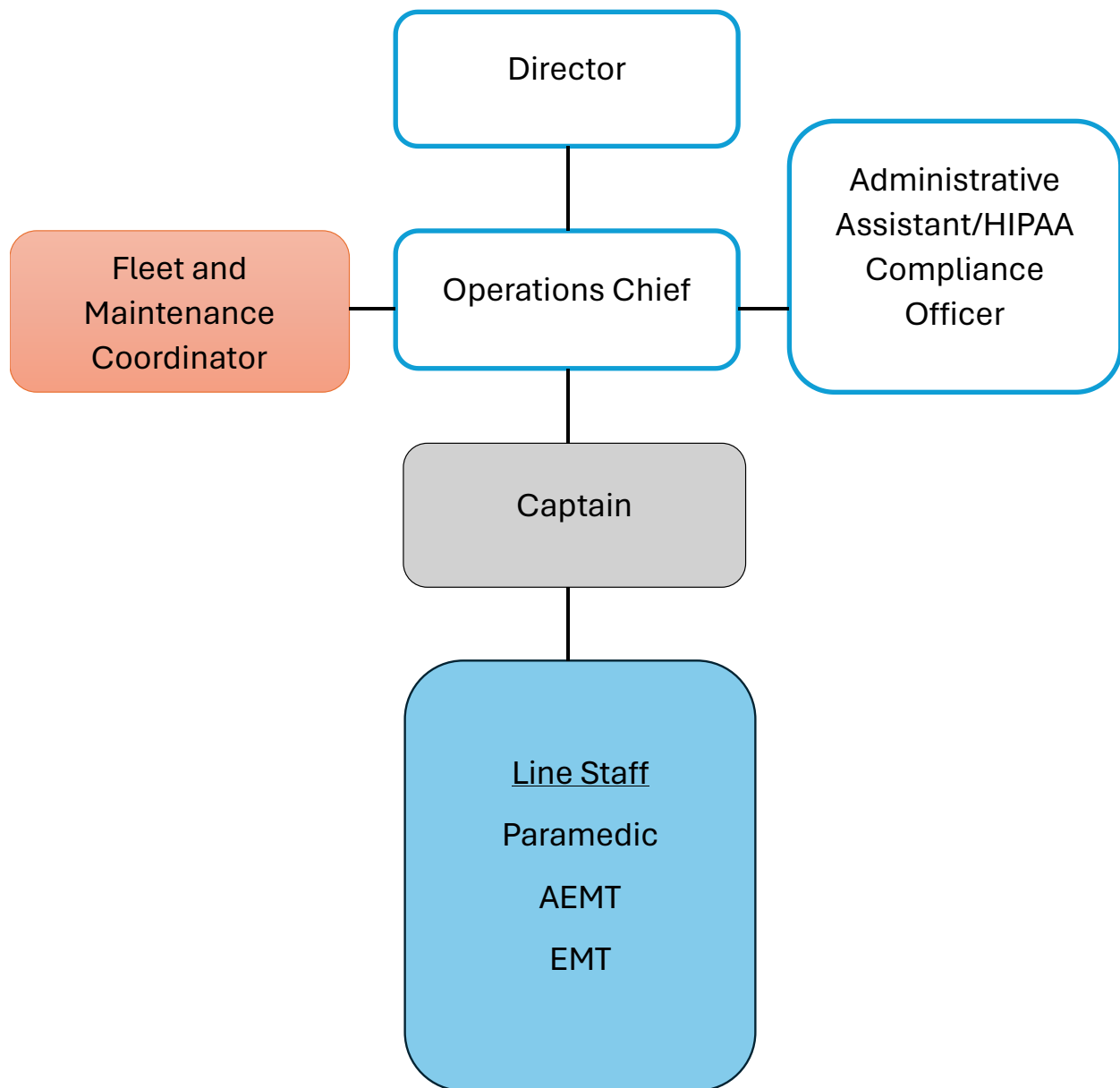
The Ambulance Director is a very vital part of our management team.. Utilizing the chain of command, the Director is primarily responsible for overseeing daily operations, planning the work schedule, monitoring the quality of your work, and providing you with whatever assistance you may need.

An important part of your Director's responsibilities is to answer questions, listen to your concerns, help you explore alternatives and options to resolve problems, and take action where appropriate. Our team prides itself on an "open door policy," and you are encouraged to approach the management team, including the Director, with thoughts, problems, or other ideas for improving our organization.

## Chain of Command

The ambulance service utilizes a chain of command, as outlined in the organizational chart below. The person above you in the chain of command is who you should report to for general operational questions or needs. They will also be your direct supervisor, will manage your job duties and monitor your performance.

## Lee County EMS Organizational Chart



## **Communications**

Open communication is essential to the overall success of the organization. We encourage open and positive communication between management and employees. Departmental meetings will be held in order to help maintain open lines of communication throughout the organization.

Experience has shown that concerns can very often be resolved by getting them out in the open as quickly as possible. You should communicate any problem situations or concerns in accordance with the chain of command, or directly to administration if necessary. They will deal with your concern promptly. If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your concern, or, if for some reason, you cannot take the concern to the Director, you may take your concern to the designated member(s) of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, who acts as a liaison to the ambulance service. When appropriate, attempt to schedule an appointment with the Director or the designated Board of Supervisor designee, to discuss the concern or issue. Every effort will be made to keep discussions confidential, when appropriate and/or requested, if legally allowed.

The Ambulance Service has a strong focus on compliance. We must comply with all applicable laws and regulations that govern the highly regulated EMS and medical transportation field. We strive to meet the expectations of the regulatory bodies, patients, and customers. If at any time you feel that we are not being fully compliant with the law or regulations, we encourage you to express your concerns to the Director.

## **Employees File & Updating Personal Information**

It is important that the Ambulance Service maintain complete and accurate employees' records for all employees. In order to keep these records up to date for operational, emergency and insurance purposes, it is essential that you notify the Company as soon as possible if there is any change to any of the following items:

- a. Legal name.
- b. Home address.
- c. Home telephone number.
- d. Person to contact in an emergency.
- e. Number of dependents.
- f. Marital status.
- g. Change of beneficiary.
- h. Driving record or status of driver's license.
- i. Military status.
- j. Exemptions on your W-4 tax form (*employees only*).
- k. Certifications, recognitions, expiration dates, identification numbers, etc.
- l. I-9 immigration forms (*employees only*).



Since we refer to your employees file when making decisions in connection with promotions, transfers, corrective counseling, and other important events, it is to your benefit (and at times required of you) to be sure your employees file includes accurate and relevant information. Your file should reflect the completion of educational or training courses, outside civic activities, and documentation of areas of interest and skills, whether related to your current position or not, as this information may have a positive impact on future assignments, promotions, etc. Your employees file may also reflect other information, both positive and negative, related to your relationship with the organization.

The Ambulance Service reserves the right to maintain records related to investigations of possible criminal offenses, reference letters, documents prepared for criminal, civil, or grievance procedures, and materials used for other operations. This includes the results of criminal background checks, driving history, and medical examinations performed as part of your employment with the organization. To the extent possible, these records will be kept confidential.

### **Medical/Physical Examination**

We are a safety-sensitive operation, and all employees of the service are deemed to be safety-sensitive employees. Lives depend on our ability to deal with a wide range of situations, both physically and mentally. All applicants for employment will be required to undergo a post offer Medical / Physical Examination consistent with Section 2.5 of the Lee County Personnel Policy and drug testing as set out within Section 4.13 of the Lee County Personnel Policy. The cost of the exam and the testing will be covered by the organization, and may also include medical history, x-rays, and laboratory tests.

Employment with the Ambulance Service is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of the examination and screenings and a determination that you are capable of performing the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation for any disabilities that may affect your ability to function in a safe and effective manner and to perform the essential functions of the position.

As a condition of continued employment with the Ambulance Service, employees may be required to undergo additional medical examinations to ensure the employee's continued ability to perform the essential functions of the position and routine and/or random illegal substance screening, consistent with policies further outlined in the Lee County Personnel Policy and this Handbook.

### **Compliance**

The Ambulance Service is committed to adhering to all local, state, and federal laws that relate to the operation of our organization. As an employee of the Ambulance Service, you will be expected to adhere to these requirements as well. The Ambulance Service may be required to report violations of applicable laws and regulations to appropriate authorities. Be aware that actions or inaction that is violative of applicable laws and regulations may subject you to corrective counseling, discipline, and/or termination.

## **Section I**

### **General Policies – All Employees**

#### **Background Checks**

**Purpose:** To follow state and federal laws, and to ensure the highest degree of safety for our employees and patients by adequately screening the background of our employees.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service shall perform all necessary background checks, including criminal history, child, or elder abuse history, driving record, and other required background checks prior to any service performed by a potential employee or volunteer. Each employee or volunteer must satisfactorily complete the background check process prior to performing any services.

**Procedure:**

**I. Criminal History Record Background Checks.**

- a. Each applicant must provide necessary information required for all criminal background check forms, local, state and/or national. Each applicant shall also complete a background check authorization form.
- b. The Ambulance Service will submit the necessary background check form on behalf of each applicant to the relevant local, state, or federal agency of the Service's choosing. The applicant will ordinarily not be permitted to perform services until the results of the background check are received.
  1. If a criminal history record check indicates that a potential employee or volunteer has been convicted (including a plea of "no contest") of any crime that is relevant when considering employment, they may not be eligible for employment. Additionally, any employee or volunteer who is later convicted of a crime may be subject to immediate termination of employment. (Convictions for offenses will not necessarily preclude employment but will be considered in making employment decisions based on the relevance of the conviction to the work performed).
  2. If the criminal background check returns with no record of conviction, the applicant may be permitted to perform services and may be hired.
  3. If the criminal background check returns with a record of a conviction that is relevant to preclude employment, the applicant will receive notice that he or she is precluded from employment as a result of the criminal background check.
- c. Any applicant for employment who does not cooperate with the criminal history records check process will not be considered for employment.

- d. In addition to cooperating with the background check, each applicant shall provide a list of all criminal convictions. Convictions will be considered based on factors that relate to suitability for employment in the position applied for, including the type and severity of the crime, and when the conviction occurred.
- e. The Ambulance Service may periodically request that additional criminal background checks occur throughout the term of employment. Full cooperation with such periodic checks is expected, and failure to cooperate will result in discipline.
- f. All employees have an ongoing obligation to disclose any convictions during their employment/membership to the Ambulance Service. Employees who fail to make such a disclosure will be subject to appropriate discipline.

## **II. Driving Record Background Check for All Employees Whose Participation Involves the Operation of a Motor Vehicle.**

- a. Individuals with a poor driving record may not be permitted to operate Department vehicles, and in some cases, may not be considered for employment. Each applicant is required to submit necessary information to the Ambulance Service to enable the Service to obtain a copy of the driving record.
- b. All provisions of Section 2.15 of the Lee County Personnel Policy shall apply to the Ambulance Service.
- c. At all times during employment/membership, employees must meet the following criteria while operating Department vehicles:
  - 1. They must have a valid driver's license (where work requires operation of a Department vehicle).
  - 2. They must observe all traffic laws.
  - 3. They must not be addicted to, or under the influence of, alcohol or drugs.
  - 4. They must be free from physical or mental impairments that may adversely affect the person's ability to drive and pose a danger to self or others if those impairments cannot be reasonably accommodated.
  - 5. If operating Company emergency vehicles, they should have successfully completed an Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course ("EVOC") of instruction.
- d. Any changes in an employee's driving record (such as conviction for speeding, or any conviction for a moving traffic violation) must be reported to the Director immediately. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **III. Review of OIG Exclusions.**

- a. The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports those individuals or organizations that have been excluded from participating in federal health care programs. Those on the excluded list are not permitted to provide services that will be billed to a federal health care program (such as treating Medicare/Medicaid patients) and are not permitted to be involved in billing or related functions.
- b. As part of its application process, the Ambulance Service will research the OIG's database for possible applicant exclusion. Exclusion from any federal health care program constitutes grounds for disqualification of employment.
- c. The Ambulance Service will conduct periodic re-checks of the OIG exclusion database. In the event that a current employee or member is found to appear on the exclusion list, termination of employment may be required.

### **Exposure Control & Education**

**Purpose:** To provide a safe work environment for all employees, patients, and others by limiting our exposure to infectious disease and to appropriately deal with exposures that do occur.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service expects all employees to follow the "Exposure Control Plan" that has been developed, as well as all other safety reporting and training standards to minimize or eliminate instances of exposure to blood borne pathogens and other contaminants or diseases and to otherwise prevent injury in the workplace.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Exposure Control Plan.**

- a. The Ambulance Service has implemented an "Exposure Control Plan" ("Plan") that is consistent with Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standards. This Plan also includes relevant safety Policies, as required under the Plan.
- a. Relevant exposure and safety areas addressed in the Plan include, but are not limited to:
  - Universal precautions.
  - Sharps disposal (engineering controls).
  - Personal protective equipment.
  - Disposal of regulated waste.
  - Disposal of contaminated linens.
  - Proper use of labels.
  - Exposure reporting requirements.

- c. All employees shall follow exposure requirements and reporting obligations as outlined in full in the “Exposure Control Plan.”

## **II. Vaccination.**

- a. Hepatitis B Vaccination.
  - 1. The Ambulance Service may make the Hepatitis B vaccination available to employees at no cost and within 10 days of initial assignment to employees at risk of blood borne pathogen exposure. Vaccination is encouraged unless:
    - A. Documentation exists that the employee or member has previously received the vaccination,
    - B. Antibody testing reveals that the employee or member is immune, or
    - C. Medical evaluation shows that vaccination is contraindicated.
  - 2. Employees may choose to decline the vaccination. If employees choose to decline the vaccination, he or she must sign a refusal form acknowledging the refusal to receive the vaccination that will be provided by the Ambulance service.

## **III. Education and Training.**

- a. The Ambulance Service shall conduct, on a regular basis, various training and educational sessions regarding blood borne pathogens, contractions of illness, safety and universal precautions procedures, and other such trainings on topics required or recommended by federal and state safety and regulatory agencies.
- b. The Ambulance Service shall provide important safety and health information (e.g., OSHA updates and state Department of Health findings and publications regarding illness, blood borne pathogens, infectious disease control) on designated bulletin boards, through employee’s publications, and by other means.
- b. Education and training are critical for the safety of all employees and patients that the Ambulance Service treats. It is critical that all employees be involved in the training related to exposure control and proper use and disposal of instruments and gear, to prevent contamination, hazards, or otherwise compromise the health and safety of employees or patients. Failure to attend mandatory training sessions may lead to discipline.

**General Compliance Policy**  
**(Standards of Care, Legal Compliance, Fraud & Abuse, Conflicts of Interest, Business Compliance, Personal Conduct)**

**Purpose:** To remain in compliance with all federal, state, and local rules, laws, and ordinances that relate to the provision of ambulance services.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service expects all employees to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that is compliant with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations related to the operation of an ambulance service, including but not limited to billing/reimbursement practices and patient confidentiality.

**Procedure:**

**I. General Standard of Care.**

- a. Conduct that is dangerous to others, dishonest, immoral, illegal, or abusive will not be tolerated. Violation of these standards of conduct will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**II. Legal Compliance / Fraud.**

- a. The Ambulance Service expects its employees to refrain from conduct that may violate the federal fraud and abuse laws (i.e., Anti-Kickback Statute; False Claims Act). These laws prohibit:
  - 1. Direct, indirect, or disguised payments in exchange for the referral of patients.
  - 2. The submission of false, fraudulent, or misleading claims to any government entity or third-party payer, including claims for services not rendered, claims which characterize the service differently than the service actually rendered, or claims which do not otherwise comply with applicable program or contractual requirements.
  - 3. Making false representations to any person or entity in order to gain or retain participation in a program or to obtain payment for any service.
  - 4. Submitting false claims to the government by seeking payment by:
    - A. Up-coding (increasing the level of service actually rendered).
    - B. Fabricating transports (billing for transports that did not occur).
    - C. Falsifying claim information (adding false information to demonstrate medical necessity when the original documentation fails to support medical necessity).

- b. All employees must comply with applicable antitrust and similar laws that regulate competition. Examples of conduct prohibited by these laws include:
  - 1. Agreements to fix prices, bid rigging, collusion (including price sharing) with competitors.
  - 2. Boycotts or certain exclusive dealing and price discrimination agreements.
  - 3. Unfair trade practices including bribery, misappropriation of trade secrets, deception, intimidation, and similar unfair practices. Employees are expected to seek advice from the Ambulance Service's legal counsel when confronted with business decisions involving a risk of violation of the antitrust laws.
- c. Employees are expected to utilize resources appropriately and efficiently, to recycle where possible, and otherwise dispose of all waste in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and to work cooperatively with the appropriate authorities to remedy any environmental contamination for which the Ambulance Service may be responsible.
- d. All employees shall treat all other employees, patients, family members, vendors, and business partners fairly and equitably. In accordance with the non-discrimination commitment, the Ambulance Service will treat patients without regard to the race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other protected class.
- e. All employees shall be recruited, hired, trained, promoted, assigned, transferred, laid off, recalled, and terminated based on ability, achievement, experience and conduct without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other protected class.
- f. Employees shall act in accordance with the Lee County Personnel Policy and specifically Section 4.12 Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Retaliation. NO form of harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other protected class will be tolerated. Each allegation of harassment or discrimination will be promptly investigated in accordance with the Lee County Personnel Policy.
- g. All employees shall accurately and honestly represent the Ambulance Service and will not engage in any activity or scheme intended to defraud anyone of money, property, or honest services.
  - 1. The Ambulance Service requires candor and honesty from individuals in the performance of their responsibilities and in communication with our attorneys and auditors.

2. Employees shall not make false or misleading statements to any patient, person, or entity doing business with the Ambulance Service about other patients, persons, or entities doing business or competing with the Ambulance Service, or about the products or services of the Ambulance Service or its competitors.
- h. Employees shall not misappropriate confidential or proprietary information belonging to another person or entity, or utilize any publication, document, computer program, information, or product in violation of a third party's interest in such product.
    1. All employees are responsible to ensure they do not improperly copy for their own use documents or computer programs in violation of applicable copyright laws or licensing agreements.
    2. Employees shall not utilize confidential business information obtained from competitors (including patient and customer lists, price lists, contracts, or other information in violation of a covenant not to compete or a prior employment agreement) in a manner likely to provide an unfair competitive advantage to the Ambulance Service.

### **III. Business Compliance.**

- a. Business transactions with vendors, contractors, and other third parties shall be free from offers or solicitation of gifts and favors or other improper inducements in exchange for influence or assistance in a transaction.
- b. The standards set forth below are intended to guide employees in determining the appropriateness of the listed activities or behaviors within the context of business relationships, including relationships with vendors, providers, contractors, third party payers, and government entities. It is the intent that this Policy be construed broadly to avoid even the appearance of improper activity. If there is any doubt or concern about whether specific conduct or activities are ethical or otherwise appropriate, employees should contact the Director.
  1. Employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting tips, personal gratuities, monetary tips, or gifts from patients or family members of patients. If a patient or another individual wishes to present a monetary gift, he or she should be referred to the Director.



2. Employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting gifts, favors, services, entertainment, or other things of value from outside entities to the extent that decision-making or actions affecting the Ambulance Service might be influenced. Outside entities include equipment vendors, hospitals, physicians, nursing facilities, dialysis facilities, or other individuals or organizations with which the Ambulance Service maintains, or could maintain a business relationship, or where either the Ambulance Service or the outside entity is in a capacity to make referrals to one another. Similarly, the offer or giving of money, services, gifts, or other things of value by the Ambulance Service employees with the expectation of influencing the judgment or decision-making process of any purchaser, supplier, customer, government official or other person is prohibited.
  3. Notwithstanding #2 above, employees may receive and offer token gifts or promotional items to and from vendors that have a nominal value. Examples of nominal gifts include coffee mugs, T-shirts, pens, flashlights, and other similar “promotional” items. If any member or employee has any concern whether an item should be accepted, the member or employee should consult with the Director. To the extent possible, these items should be shared with the Ambulance Service’s other members and employees. Employees shall not accept excessive gifts, meals, expensive entertainment or other offers of goods or services that have more than a nominal value nor may they solicit gifts from vendors, suppliers, contractors, or other persons. For purposes of this Policy, nominal shall mean less than \$2.99.
  4. Attendance at local, vendor-sponsored workshops, seminars, and training sessions is permitted, but such attendance should not be offered free of cost when the vendor imposes a charge on other persons or organizations.
- b. Employees may not utilize “insider” information for any business activity conducted by or on behalf of the Ambulance Service. All business relations with contractors must be conducted at arm’s length both in fact and in appearance, and in compliance with standard business practices. Employees must disclose personal relationships and business activities with contractor employees that may be construed by an impartial observer as influencing the members or employees’ performance or duties.

### **Illness in the Workplace**

**Purpose:** To comply with state and federal laws regarding absences and ability to work involving illness of an employee.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will permit employees with certain illness and/or disease to continue to work, so long as their condition does not affect patient care and they can continue to perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.

## **Procedure:**

### **I. Standards.**

- a. Employees with life threatening illnesses, cancer, and heart disease for example, may wish to continue their normal pursuits, including work, to the extent allowed by their illness.
- b. The Ambulance Service supports the continued employment and scheduling of said employees so long as said employees can perform the essential functions of their position and their illness does not affect patient care or health or jeopardize the well-being of fellow employees.
- c. The Ambulance Service will make reasonable accommodations in accordance with all legal requirements when feasible and appropriate to do so.
- d. The Ambulance Service will take reasonable precautions to protect confidential medical information received by employees concerning their health condition from inappropriate disclosure and/or access. Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. But it may also be necessary to have the ability to review the information to the extent reasonable accommodations may be made to properly deal with returning to work issues, or to determine if continued service is possible.

### **II. Inapplicability.**

- a. This Policy is not intended to apply to employees with temporary or minor contagious or communicable diseases (e.g., flu, cold). Persons with such types of infectious disease that could easily spread to other employees or patients should refrain from working until their condition improves.
- b. This policy is also not intended to cover any illness that is contagious to the extent that patient care or the well-being of other employees may be jeopardized.

## **Inclement Weather**

**Purpose:** To ensure adequate emergency response 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, regardless of weather conditions.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service requires all employees to report for their scheduled shift regardless of the weather conditions.

**Procedure:**

**I. Standards.**

- a. As a public safety service organization, the Ambulance Service is committed to providing continuous and quality service to our community at all times.
- b. Unfortunately, weather conditions (snow or ice) or natural disasters (earthquake or tornado) can make the commute to work difficult and time consuming.
- c. Unless otherwise notified, all employees are expected to report to work regardless of the weather conditions, and the Ambulance Service will attempt to operate under our normal work schedules in all weather conditions.
- d. During inclement weather, employees should plan ahead and allow sufficient time for a safe trip to work.
- e. Standard call-off procedures and use of Vacation, Sick, or Personal Time will apply in situations where weather affects the ability to get to work. In times of serious weather conditions, at the discretion of management, these requirements may be relaxed, and on-duty employees may be required to remain on duty until replacements can safely arrive at work.

**Issuance and Use of Company Equipment**

**Purpose:** To provide a safe and effective work environment with equipment that remains in good working condition.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will not tolerate misuse or misappropriation of Company equipment, as respect for Company equipment is expected at all times.

**Procedure:**

**I. Ambulance Service Property / Equipment.**

- a. Any Ambulance Service property issued to employees, such as keys, pagers, radios, or uniforms, must be returned prior to receipt of any final paycheck.
- b. Employees may be responsible for paying for any lost or damaged items, as well as for any unreturned items at the time of separation from service. “Damaged items” are items damaged beyond what would be expected with normal “wear and tear.”
- c. No item purchased or supplied by the Ambulance Service should be removed from the premises without express written authorization of a supervisor. Further:

1. All employees may be subject to random searches as they leave the Ambulance Service premises, in accordance with the “Workplace Search” Policy.
  2. Employees found possessing any Ambulance Service property, other than items issued to the employee, without express written authorization may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.
- d. It is the responsibility of all employees to understand the equipment needed to perform his or her duties. All employees must remember that:
1. Good care of any equipment used during the course of employment as well as the conservative use of supplies, will benefit the Ambulance Service.
  2. If equipment is not working properly or in any way appears unsafe, or damaged, employees are to notify the Shift Captain and submit a maintenance request immediately so that repairs or adjustments may be made.
  3. Any knowledge of misuse or damage to Ambulance Service property shall be promptly reported to a supervisor.
- e. Employees of the Ambulance Service work with delicate and expensive equipment. Care must be taken in handling and using such equipment. Employees will be held responsible for damage to equipment caused by carelessness, misuse, or neglect, and will be responsible for reimbursement for replacement or repair costs and could be subject to discipline.
- f. Employees must treat all equipment including vehicles, tools, devices, and other items in ambulances and in the station with respect and care.
- g. Equipment shall only be used for its intended purpose.
- h. “Clowning around” or horseplay with equipment will not be tolerated, as much of the equipment is both expensive and/or dangerous.
- i. Misuse and wasting of equipment and supplies will not be tolerated.
- j. Employees shall ensure that ambulances are stocked, that equipment is in working order, and that supplies are checked at the beginning of each shift and are replaced at the conclusion of each call.

## **II. Controlled Substances and Pharmaceuticals.**

- a. The Ambulance Service has in its control, and has general access to controlled substances, narcotics, and various other drugs that are carried in the ambulances

and administered under appropriate circumstances, by approved and certified employees.

- a. Under no circumstances shall employees take from the Ambulance Service, misappropriate, or otherwise distribute, steal, sell, or inappropriately administer (to self or others) these controlled substances.
- b. Persons found in violation of this provision will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination. Additional penalties may include discipline by the state regulatory agency including loss of licensure certification and money penalties.

### **Non-Fraternization**

**Purpose:** To maintain a professional work environment dedicated to providing the highest level of patient care possible with minimal interference from personal relationships.

**Policy:** Personal relationships among co-workers must not enter the organization in any manner that interferes with work or creates potential conflicts among our staff.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. Personal relationships between employees outside of work can often have an adverse effect on the working relationship. Uncomfortable strain, allegations of sexual harassment, and other workplace distractions are all negative side effects of a personal relationship that may occur among employees outside of the workplace.
- b. The Ambulance Service recognizes that it cannot specifically dictate how its employees may act outside of the workplace. The Ambulance Service discourages personal romantic relationships among employees to the extent that such activity has an effect on the workplace.
- c. In the interest of maintaining a professional atmosphere in the workplace, the Ambulance Service discourages romantic relations among employees. However, in the event that a romantic relationship exists, the following activities are prohibited:
  1. Dating activities on Company time or Company property.
  2. Use of Company property to arrange dating activities.
  3. Hand holding, kissing, hugging, sexual comments, and other behavior generally associated with a dating or romantic relationship on Company time or Company property.

4. Failure to report to management personal relationships involving employees at different levels of the organizational structure.
- d. To the extent that a dating relationship or romance occurs among two employees, and the relationship interferes with the ability to perform job duties or leads to a breach of our professional standards or inappropriate behavior, one or both of the employees involved in the romance may be subject to discipline or change in scope of job duties.
- e. In general, the Ambulance Service will not permit two employees involved in a romantic relationship to work together directly, or for one person to supervise the other person. Exceptions may be made in circumstances where it can be shown that there is no interference in the workplace.
- f. Family members, related within the 2nd degree of consanguinity and employees in a romantic relationship, whether cohabitating or not, shall not work together on the same truck absent emergent or exigent circumstances or as otherwise approved to in writing by the Ambulance Director.

### **Patient Relations**

**Purpose:** To maintain a positive image and maintain good standing with our patients and the community that we serve.

**Policy:** All employees shall be good ambassadors for the goodwill of the Ambulance Service and treat others with respect and dignity at all times.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. Employees must act competently and deal with patients and their families in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner. The way we perform our individual jobs presents an image reflective of our entire organization.
- b. Employees shall communicate pleasantly and respectfully with other employees, patients, family members, vendors, health care associates and business partners at all times. Positive relations not only enhance the public's perception or image of the Ambulance Service, but also pay off in loyalty and future service requests.
- c. Employees are expected to follow-up on orders and questions promptly, provide professional replies to inquiries and requests, and perform all duties in an orderly manner. Serving the best interests and needs of all patients is our ultimate goal.

- d. Employees should take great pride in the work they do, and to perform at the best level possible. Individual behavior and professionalism, as well as that presented by the Ambulance Service, is important for all persons with whom we deal.

## **II. Patient Care.**

- a. Employees must treat all patients equally and without respect to race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other protected class.
- b. Employees must provide patients, family members, and others with the highest degree of care they are certified to provide and as appropriate to the situation. At no time shall any employee be expected to perform a service that he or she is not qualified to perform.
- c. Employees shall follow all relevant patient care procedures. Following these standards helps to assure that the highest level of patient care is provided.

## **III. Patient Requests and Complaints.**

- a. Patient requests and complaints shall be handled in a professional and courteous manner. Nothing is more important than being courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention given to patients since that is the way in which the Ambulance Service will be judged.
- b. Patient requests for information should be handled in accordance with HIPAA release of information policies.
- c. Patient requests (or refusals) during care and/or transport shall be made in accordance with relevant patient care policies and applicable protocols.
- d. In all cases, HIPAA considerations must be evaluated. When possible, a supervisor or manager should be contacted, who should field the request or complaint. To the extent that the Director is not available, the employee should record the information from the caller, and make sure that the Director is notified.
- e. Efforts should be made to make management aware of such a complaint as soon as possible, so that quick resolution may be made. Additional information on handling patient complaints can also be found as part of the “Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving” Policy.

## **IV. Patient Bill of Rights.**

- a. In dealing with patients and in rendering care, all employees are expected to respect the patient's rights, and to provide medical care and transportation at all times in accordance with certain rights. Failure to do so is a basis for discipline, up to and including dismissal.

c. Patients have the following rights:

1. To receive respectful care given by competent employees.
2. To receive every consideration of his or her privacy concerning medical care. Case discussion, examination and treatment are considered confidential and should be conducted as discretely as possible.
3. To have all records pertaining to medical care treated as confidential, except as otherwise provided by law.
4. To receive quality care and high professional standards that are continually maintained and reviewed.
5. To expect emergency procedures be implemented without delay.
6. To refuse drugs, treatment or procedures offered to the extent permitted by law, and to be informed of the medical consequences of the refusal of any drugs, treatment, or procedure.
7. To receive medically appropriate services without discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, age, disability, political belief, military service, or any other protected class.
8. To receive appropriate pre-transport assessment, evaluation, and treatment; careful handling, preparation, and monitoring of conditions, including thoughtful regard for those individuals associated with the patient; attention to all medical needs during transport; and a comfortable, safe ride to the acute care facility of their choice and/or the most medically appropriate facility.
9. To be served with state of the art, strictly maintained, and properly functioning emergency medical equipment, including the ambulance, litters, and portable equipment.
10. To receive professional, cheerful, and attentive service throughout the course of the transport.

### **Privacy and Security of Patient Information**

**Purpose:** To remain in compliance with all state and federal laws designed to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and security of patient information.



**Policy:** All employees shall maintain the confidentiality of patient and other confidential information in accordance with applicable legal and ethical standards and all Ambulance Service Patient Privacy Policies.

**Procedure:**

**I. Background.**

- a. The Ambulance Service and its employees are in possession of, and have access to, a broad variety of confidential, sensitive, and proprietary information. Inappropriate release of this information could be injurious to individuals, business associates, and the Ambulance Service itself. All employees have an obligation to actively protect and safeguard confidential, sensitive, and proprietary information in a manner designed to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of such information.
  1. All employees have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Ambulance Service Policies that have been enacted to address patient confidentiality. Employees are advised to consult appropriate HIPAA Policies or the Compliance Officer for additional information.
  2. There shall be periodic training on patient privacy issues and all employees are expected to become familiar with all patient privacy policies in addition to those contained in the Handbook.

**II. Privacy.**

- a. Information pertaining to a patient's medical situation may generally only be shared with other health care professionals involved with the treatment of the patient. Information may also be shared for other limited purposes, such as payment activities and health care operations, or other purposes specifically permitted by law, in accordance with the Ambulance Service policies regarding the privacy of patient information.

**III. Security.**

- a. Much of the patient information that we collect is maintained on computers and stored and transmitted electronically. In order to preserve the integrity of that data and protect the confidentiality and security of this patient information, employees must follow all applicable computer use and data security policies.

**IV. Privacy/Security.**

- a. The Ambulance Director is responsible for overall Privacy and Security Policies. If you have any questions about the use or release of any patient information, you should contact the HIPAA Compliance Officer.

## **Release of Information to Media**

**Purpose:** To prevent the inappropriate release of confidential patient information and other confidential Company information to the media, and to ensure a consistent approach to media relations.

**Policy:** As a general rule, only designated employees may contact and/or speak with the media or release information to members of the media. All employees shall refer any media requests for information to the Director or Operations Chief.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. Employees may from time to time, receive media inquiries from various news/media agencies, including:
  1. Newspapers and television stations, for reporting a rescue, accident response, fatality, or reporting on EMS activity, or “general coverage” of EMS.
  2. Magazines or periodicals, interviewing employees related to incidents or general EMS issues of interest to the public.
- b. When contacted by the media you must notify management with general information about the nature of the request and contact information for the reporter/writer. When contacted by the media you should refer the request to management.
- c. All communication with the media must be approved by management. When approved, employees may discuss general topics of interest and ambulance and EMS related issues with the media. In talking with the media about non-patient or organization specific issues, all employees should follow the following guidelines:
  1. Refrain from giving an “off the record” comment. Never consider any comment as “off the record.”
  2. The following types of information should NEVER be released:
    - A. Patient-specific information, including names, addresses, assessment of injuries, treatment provided, and history/diagnosis. As a covered entity, we are bound by HIPAA to preserve patient confidentiality. Release of patient-specific information to the media is not permitted.

- B. Information that may be prejudicial to law enforcement investigations (e.g., “I think the driver that caused the accident was drinking alcohol”).
  - C. Information that is not known for certain such as subjective or your “opinion” (e.g., “The car must have been speeding at the time of the accident”).
  - D. Information that may be an invasion of privacy, such as suicide information, AIDS status, overdose, psychiatric transport, cause of death.
- 4. Employees are encouraged to respond to requests for media interviews to discuss your job, your role as an EMT, AEMT, Paramedic, and your experiences as an employee of the Ambulance Service. As long as patient information is not discussed, the name of the Ambulance Service is not placed in a negative light, and confidential business information is not released, such interviews will generally be approved and permitted.
  - 5. In any situation where an interview becomes uncomfortable, you are free to stop it at any time. You are not required to talk to members of the media. You are also free to completely refrain from speaking to the media about any topic at all.
- d. We must balance providing the public with information about the services we provide against the individual rights of the patient to keep their medical information confidential. We fully respect the right of the public to know about our activities as we are a public agency subject to public scrutiny. But we can provide information to the public only to the extent that the law allows us.
  - e. Employees must refer all media inquiries to the Director or Operations Chief. Doing so helps assure that appropriate information is released, and our public image is maintained.

## **II. Specific Standards for Dealing with Media Requests for Patient Information.**

- a. General information about a response may be released, provided that patient identifying information is not offered. For example, acceptable releases include:
  - 1. Name of hospital. You may provide the name of the hospital to which patients have been transported. (Acceptable Example: The media calls about “the accident at Third and Main earlier this afternoon.” You may inform the media “a patient was transported from the accident scene to County General Hospital.”). **THE NAME OF THE PATIENT SHOULD NOT BE RELEASED TO THE MEDIA.** It is not appropriate for us to confirm or deny the identity of a patient. Requests for patient identity should be directed to a law enforcement agency or to the hospital.

2. Number of patients. You may provide the total number of patients involved in an accident or transported to a facility. You may not indicate specifics about the vehicle a patient was driving, or which patient went to a particular facility. (Acceptable Example: You may inform the media that “four patients were transported from the fire at the XYZ Chemical Factory. Two were taken to County General Hospital and two were taken to the Regional Medical Center.”)
3. Age & Gender. You may provide the age of a patient and the gender of the patient unless it could reasonably be used to identify the patient. (Acceptable Example: You may inform the media “a 39 y/o male was transported from the accident on the Interstate.” You would not want to disclose to the media “a 39 y/o male was transported from 124 Main St.” since this information can be used to determine the identity of the patient.)
4. Designation of crew members. The designation of crew members as paramedics or EMTs is not protected health information. You may state, for example, that one paramedic and two EMTs were involved in caring for the patients involved in a motor vehicle accident. (You could identify the names of the employee who responded, but some services prefer not to release this information). You are not permitted to describe the specific type of care rendered to patients at the scene or on the way to the hospital. Nor may you speculate on what injuries a patient may or may not have sustained. (Acceptable Example: “Employees on the scene of the incident included two paramedics and a supervisor and advanced life support was administered.”)
5. Type of Transport. You may indicate that a particular call was an emergency, and that transportation was facilitated by ambulance or helicopter. Do not speculate on the patient’s condition even if you are sure of that condition. (Acceptable Example: “Of the 3 patients on the scene of the incident, one was transported by helicopter to the ABC Trauma Center and two were transported as non-emergency patients to the local hospital emergency department.”)
6. Non-PHI. Information that is not classified as PHI may be released to the media consistent with Policy and state law. For instance, information about a fire response or a standby that did not involve patient care may be released to the media, as may general information about an event. (Acceptable Example: “We treated 45 patients during the two-day festival, and 6 were transported to local hospitals for various heat-related complaints”).

7. Disclosures Authorized by the Patient. In the event that the patient or the patient's legally responsible decision maker signs a HIPAA authorization form, disclosures of information, including PHI, may be made so long as they are done in accordance with the express terms of the written authorization. Authorization forms for this purpose must be HIPAA-compliant and must be approved by the Ambulance Director and HIPAA Compliance Officer.
- b. If at any time you are unclear about whether information may be disclosed to the media, always err on the side of caution, and do not disclose.

### **Scheduling**

**Purpose:** To ensure adequate emergency response and ambulance service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with the necessary complement of professional employees.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service requires you to arrive on time for your scheduled shift, or to provide for appropriate coverage when you may be unavailable to serve the assigned shift.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. The Ambulance Service reserves the right to schedule employees at any time or change the schedule in accordance with operational needs and demands.
- b. The Ambulance Service will develop a staffing schedule on a monthly basis. Work schedules may be changed from time to time at the discretion of the Ambulance Service to meet operational demands, schedule changes, and personal conflicts that may arise among assigned employees. Attempts will be made to notify all employees of any changes made to a posted schedule. To the greatest extent possible, the Ambulance Service will attempt to maintain a flexible and fair schedule and accommodate requests of employees.
- c. It is your responsibility to arrive for and complete in full your scheduled shift, unless:
  1. A pre-approved request for time off has occurred:
    - A. All requests for time off shall be made as soon as reasonably possible, preferably prior to the development of the schedule.
    - B. When a scheduled person requires time off, the employee must submit a time off request to administration, using the scheduling software used by the Ambulance Service.

2. The scheduled employee has arranged for coverage with another person subject to the following:
  - A. The Service will be utilizing Scheduling Software, initially from Aladtec. Employees shall comply with all policies and procedures associated with the use of the scheduling software as may be implemented from time to time by management when making any scheduling changes.
  - B. When arranging coverage with another person, equal “swapping” or trading shall occur. Employees shall not expect another person to cover part or an entire shift without covering an equal amount of time for that other person.
  - C.
  - D. Shift trades in coverage must be made to ensure appropriate coverage is available on every shift. For example, a Paramedic cannot trade with an EMT if another Paramedic is not available on the shift since the EMT would not be qualified to meet the requirements of the Paramedic.
  - E. Management must be advised of any and all trades as promptly as possible. Management reserves the right to refuse to permit a swap to the extent that it will pose scheduling or other employee conflicts.
- d. From time to time, it may be necessary for employees to be absent during a scheduled shift. The Ambulance Service is aware that emergencies, illnesses or pressing business that cannot be rescheduled in advance of a scheduled shift may arise. If you are unable to report for a shift or you must arrive late, and you are unable to obtain coverage, you must contact the Shift Captain immediately (with at least four (4) hours’ notice). For additional employee related information on absenteeism, please consult the “Absenteeism and Tardiness” Policy.
- e. Because all employees must be alert and able to perform their job at all times, in order to provide the best possible care to patients, all employees are expected to report to their scheduled shift well rested, and ready to perform their duties. Employees that are not well rested and are physically unable to perform their duties as a result of exhaustion may be sent home and may be subject to discipline.

- f. From time to time, employees may be required to arrive for a shift early or remain late after a shift for coverage purposes. It is requested that you remain at your post until your replacement crew has arrived and is prepared for duty. In all situations, the replacement crew is intended to mean employees with equivalent credentials (e.g., Paramedic for Paramedic, EMT for EMT, and driver for driver). This is done to make sure that there is available coverage for calls that may come in at all times. For employees, such additional time worked may qualify for overtime compensation. Employees of the Service shall comply with applicable “Overtime” provisions set out within Section 2 – Employment, Subsection 2.11 Compensatory Time and Overtime Pay and Section 4 – Employee Conduct and Work Rules, Subsection 4.5 Access to County Email, Information and Files via Cell Phone, Smart Phone, Computer or Other Capable Technology, of the Lee County Personnel Policy.
- g. Part time employees with other jobs will be placed on the schedule in accordance with their other job requirements. All employees with other jobs must provide a work schedule to their supervisor so that your work schedule at the Ambulance Service can accommodate your other work schedule.
- h. Because of the 24-hour nature of this business, you may be scheduled to work at any time of the day and may vary from week to week. You are asked to cooperate with your assigned schedule. Unauthorized leave from a scheduled shift or failure to follow your scheduled work hours will result in appropriate discipline.

**Part Time Minimum Availability**  
**Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**Purpose:** To ensure regular, timely attendance so adequate staffing is available at all times. Also to ensure all staff work frequently enough to maintain competency with respect to Lee County EMS’ equipment, policies and procedures.

**Policy:** All regular part time staff shall provide their quarterly availability in order to maintain employment at Lee County EMS.

**Procedure:**

**I. Procedure**

- a. Part time status employees are required to provide a minimum of 36 hours of availability per calendar quarter. (January-March; April-June; July-September; October-December.) Availability shall be submitted on the schedule prior to completion of the schedule on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - 1. Availability includes shifts signed up for (whether or not the shift is assigned to the employee), call in coverage, special event coverage or any other hours worked for Lee County EMS.

2. All Availability will be given utilizing the services scheduling software.
  3. All scheduling will then be done per the “Scheduling” policy.
- b. Employees who are assigned a shift but do not work it due to a call in, will not receive credit for those hours.

## **II. Documentation and Penalties.**

- a. Hours worked and availability provided will be tracked by management using the services scheduling software, employee files, or a combination of both.
- b. Employees failing to meet the notice and availability requirements of this policy will be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

### **Testifying in Court & Depositions**

**Purpose:** To uphold the requirements of the law, to support civic duty and protect employees from wage loss when called upon to appear in court for Company related business.

**Policy:** Employees are expected to testify about work related matters, when properly subpoenaed to do so, in an honest and truthful manner. Employees testifying for work related matters when required shall receive compensation for time spent in providing such testimony. Full-Time Employees engaged in court testimony for personal matters will be required to take paid time off or request unpaid leave as provided at Section 3.10 and/or 3.12, respectively, of the Lee County Personnel Policy. (Part-Time employees are not entitled to paid leave and shall not be scheduled for work on days where they cannot be present due to non-work related Court or Deposition requirements as set out above.)

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. Employees may be required to testify in court, for incidents that relate to their employment by the Ambulance Service as well as personal matters, not tied to their employment. In both circumstances, the provisions of the “Scheduling” Policy shall be considered so as to ensure coverage when the giving of testimony conflicts with a scheduled assignment.
- b. Employees who are subpoenaed to appear, when the subpoena is tied to a work-related event/action, will be compensated by the Ambulance Service at their regular rate of pay and/or their overtime rate of pay if said testimony results in the employee being due overtime.



- c. Employees who must attend a hearing, deposition, or court appearance for reasons other than for testimony related to their employment with the Ambulance Service will have to request time off, on either a paid, or unpaid basis, depending upon accrued time off available to them in accordance with company scheduling policies. As previously noted, appropriate provisions for coverage must be made when testimony conflicts with a scheduled work assignment.
- d. A copy of the subpoena or other related court document must be provided to the Director with further explanation as may be necessary by the employee so that the Director may determine the nature of the court appearance and the employee's eligibility for paid time off.
- e. You are required to notify the Director if you are the subject of personal action by an individual or agency that has any business or patient relationship, affiliation, or contract with the Ambulance Service. This includes patients, customers, or operators of any vehicle involved in an accident with Ambulance Service vehicles, and employees and staff of organizations with whom the Ambulance Service has a relationship.

## **II. Reimbursement.**

- a. All time spent on Company related court business or testimony should be accurately recorded and submitted to the Director.
- b. The Ambulance Service will also provide reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses (including mileage and meals) when properly submitted with receipts where appropriate.

## **Uniform, Dress Code & Personal Appearance**

**Purpose:** To maintain a professional appearance at all times within the community, projecting a positive image to the public.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service requires all employees to meet appropriate dress code and uniform standards for the respective position of the employee.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. General Standards of Appearance.**

- a. A well-groomed and professional appearance by all employees is essential to maintaining a good public image and to improving public relations. All employees are representative of the Service and are responsible for presenting a positive and professional image accordingly.

- b. Pins, jewelry, hats, name/insignia, or other identifying symbols which are not professionally related to authorized uniforms are prohibited from being worn.
- c. Employees may be required to cover tattoos if the content of the tattoo includes images of nudity, sexuality, illicit or illegal drugs or drug references, or other lewd or visually suggestive images. Tattoos and piercings are acceptable if they do not otherwise interfere with the employee's essential job functions.
- c. Hair (including facial hair) is to be neat and groomed at all times. If a member or employee has long hair, then he or she must arrange it in such a way that it does not present a safety hazard or distract from duties. Mustaches and beards must be clean, well-trimmed, and neat, and must not interfere with the wearing of any safety or medical device, including personal protective equipment (PPE).
- d. Perfume, cologne, aftershave, scented lotion, etc., should be used in moderation or avoided altogether. Jewelry should not be excessive and should be limited to items that do not functionally restrict the employee or create a danger to employees or others. Facial jewelry, such as eyebrow rings, nose rings, lip rings and tongue studs, are not permitted to be worn during working hours or while on duty.
- e. Employees are expected to be in a clean, presentable manner with all appropriate uniform attire in place, at the start of their shift.

## **II. Uniform(s).**

- a. The Ambulance Service will provide uniforms to all employees upon employment. Additional uniforms may be requested by emailing the Operations Chief..
- b. Only the standard Ambulance Service uniform shall be worn while on duty, which shall include the following items.
  - a. Line Staff will wear issued navy blue polo, navy blue EMS pants and black EMS boots. Issued navy blue "job shirts" and uniform hats may also be worn. A plain light grey, navy blue or black undershirt may be worn.
  - b. Captains will wear an issued grey polo or grey class B uniform shirt, navy blue EMS pants and black EMS boots. Issued navy blue "job shirts" and uniform hats may also be worn. A plain light grey, navy blue or black undershirt may be worn.
    - 1. Captains working a shift on an ambulance and Acting Captains may wear the line staff uniform.
  - c. All staff may also wear issued extrication gear and high visibility coats and vests as necessary and required by policy.
  - d. Additional or non-issued items or apparel will not be worn unless approved in writing by the Director or Operations Chief.
- c. Uniforms must remain clean, unwrinkled, neat, and in good repair. Uniforms that are faded, torn, or worn are not acceptable.

- d. All employees will be provided a \$120 annual allowance to purchase approved footwear. This allowance shall be reimbursable to employees no more than once every three-hundred sixty-five days. (365 days) If an employee fails to continue in the employ of the Service for a period of six (6) months after payment by the Service of the allowance set forth herein, the employee will reimburse the Service in the full amount of the allowance within thirty (30) days following the end of their employment with the Service. Employees agree to execute a written agreement to this effect upon receiving the allowance.
- e. Pager, radio, or Company-issued phone is considered a part of the uniform and must be worn appropriately.
- f. All employees are responsible for the care and maintenance of their uniforms. If your uniform becomes soiled during a shift, it should be changed, if at all possible.
- g. Employees should not wear their uniform when not on duty, except that employees who are on call may wear their uniform during on call time.
- h. The Ambulance Service will replace uniforms that are contaminated or damaged in the line of duty.

### **Use of Issued Personal Protective Gear**

**Purpose:** To maintain provider safety and professional appearance at all times when working in higher risk environments.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service requires all employees to wear appropriate PPE for the conditions they are working in.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standard Precautions.**

- d. Employees will wear the EMS uniform outlined above along with medical exam gloves (nitrile) for every patient encounter. Eye safety glasses are also recommended.
- e. For patients with possible communicable diseases or patients reported to need a higher level of PPE, employees will wear appropriate PPE for the patients condition, This may include eye protection, a surgical mask or N-95, gown, shoe coverings, head coverings, or other PPE.
- f. Non-issued PPE such as personal safety glasses provided by staff, may be worn with approval from management.

#### **II. Additional PPE.**

- i. Employees working on or near any public road, street or highway, are required to wear high visibility PPE. This may be either their extrication gear and/or issued traffic safety vest, or ANSI high visibility coat. This does not include when parking in front of a patient's residence for a routine medical call.
- j. Any employee working at a traffic accident or other rescue scene where extrication is taking place, is required to wear full extrication gear (helmet with eye protection on, coat and pants).
- k. Employees providing support operations at fire scenes should also wear appropriate PPE. Anytime there is a risk of exposure to fire or falling debris, full extrication gear should be worn.
- l. Although LCEMS Employees are not trained in hazardous materials operations and should not be directly involved in these situations, they may have to provide patient care in the support (cold) zone of a Haz-Mat incident. In these cases, full extrication gear should be worn.
- m. Employees are required to wear issued ballistic vests anytime they are responding to a police standby for purposes of execution of warrants, hostage situations or potentially volatile scenes. Employees are also required to wear issued ballistic vests when dispatched to any call for a shooting or stabbing.
- n. Employees may provide their own personal ballistic vest with the prior approval of administration.
- o. Staff may wear any of the PPE listed above at scenes where it is not required by this policy, if they feel it is necessary.
- p. Extrication gear and ballistic vests should be kept clean and stored in the ambulance where it will be available when needed while on shift.
- q. Any lost or damaged PPE should be reported to the shift captain immediately.

### **Use of Alcohol While on Duty or On-Call**

**Purpose:** As providers of emergency services, the Ambulance Service is committed to safely serving the community without harm to our members or others. We must be ready to respond at a moment's notice to a variety of situations and to confront numerous hazards. To operate effectively and safely, we must ensure that employees are fully prepared to perform their duties without the influence of alcohol.

**Policy:** No employee shall be under the influence of alcohol while on duty, when responding to a call, or when otherwise engaged in Ambulance Service activities.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. You shall not respond to any call if you have ingested any alcoholic beverage four (4) hours prior to your work shift, or if you are on call, four (4) hours prior to being called out.

- b. Employees who appear to be under the influence of alcohol at a scene (based on the reasonable judgment of the officer in charge) will be immediately dismissed from acting in their capacity as an Ambulance Service employee at the scene, may be required to undergo alcohol testing if determined appropriate by law enforcement, and based upon all circumstances may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- c. Any employee who drives an Ambulance Service vehicle or a personal vehicle to the scene or location of an Ambulance Call, while under the influence of alcohol shall face criminal prosecution for driving under the influence and will be reported to the appropriate authorities, including EMS licensing agencies and local law enforcement agencies.
- d. On-call employees who have consumed alcoholic beverages and fail to respond to a call will be subject to appropriate discipline.

## **II. Violations.**

- a. If the Director or supervisor reasonably believes an employee is under the influence of alcohol, the employee may be taken to a medical facility for alcohol/drug testing.
- b. Any employee who refuses to be tested is subject to immediate suspension and may face termination.

## **Visitors**

**Purpose:** To protect the public, maintain patient confidentiality, and prevent distraction of employees while on duty that may occur with personal visits.

**Policy:** Visitors in the workplace shall be restricted to specified areas and may be limited in the time of their visit.

## **Procedure:**

### **I. Standards.**

- a. While visitors are not prohibited within the building, such visits should be limited.
- b. When a visitor comes to the building, the visitor must be met in a public area by an employee. Visitors must be accompanied by an employee at all times.
- c. Visitors are not permitted in areas where patient information is stored or may easily be viewed or in other areas that could negatively impact operations.
- d. While we don't limit the hours visitors are allowed, employees should be mindful to not disturb coworkers work and rest times.

## **Workplace Safety**

**Purpose:** To maintain a safe working environment, employees participating in reporting and preventing injuries is essential.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service fosters a safe work environment, free from unsafe or dangerous activities. Employees are expected to promptly report unsafe conditions.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. Workplace safety is of utmost concern to the Ambulance Service. Employees and patients alike must be protected from unsafe conditions.
- b. Employees shall always act in a professional manner, especially during patient contact. Horseplay or inattention to work assignments or patient care will not be tolerated.
- c. Our jobs require rapid response, but this response must be a safe response. Reckless driving to arrive at a scene is not permitted, as dangerous driving can pose a danger to employees and other drivers.

#### **II. Reporting Unsafe Conditions.**

- a. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to their immediate supervisor. This includes unsafe storage or use of equipment, instances of horseplay, or unsafe driving or other dangerous activities that may pose a danger to patients and others.
- b. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report (or, where appropriate, remedy) such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Workplace Searches**

**Purpose:** To safeguard the property of all employees, and prevent possession, use and sale of illegal drugs and other dangerous things in the workplace.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service may conduct random searches of persons and their property while on, in or adjacent to Ambulance Service property in conformance with applicable laws.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. The Ambulance Service reserves the right to question any person as well as inspect packages, handbags, backpacks, duffle bags, briefcases, lunchboxes, or other packages, possessions, articles of clothing, or items entering or exiting Ambulance Service property.
- b. All employees are expected to comply with a search request. A search will only be initiated when deemed to be necessary by the Director or the Director's designee.
- c. The Ambulance Service also reserves the right to search the desk, office, locker, Ambulance Service owned computer, or other assigned space of any employee, at any time, whether or not the employee is present, since all such areas and devices remain the property of the Ambulance Service.
- d. Searches are intended to discover illegal weapons and/or weapons concealed by a person without a concealed carry permit, drugs, contraband and/or improperly obtained Ambulance Service property, and may be done randomly, at the discretion of management based upon a complaint or suspicion, or in conjunction with local law enforcement officials.

## **II. Violations.**

- a. Any visitor who refuses to consent to a search when requested will be denied access to the building.
- b. Any employee who refuses to consent to a search, or who is found to possess an item that is prohibited by these policies or by law, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Section II Employee Policies**

### **Absenteeism & Tardiness**

**Purpose:** To ensure regular, timely attendance so adequate staffing is available at all times, in order to provide for the best possible service.

**Policy:** Employees must report to work on time and may not be absent from work unless absolutely necessary, and/or with supervisor approval.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Absence.**

- a. Employees are asked to call in (at least four (4) hours in advance, where possible) when they are going to be absent.
  - 1. We understand that sometimes, absence will be a sudden event, and adequate notification is impossible. In these instances, as soon as you know that you will be absent, you should notify the Shift Captain immediately.
  - 2. If you are absent due to an illness for three (3) or more consecutive work shifts, the Ambulance Service may request written documentation from a doctor to verify that you were ill. Similar written documentation may be required to verify you are medically cleared to return to work after a three (3) consecutive day absence.
- b. When you will be absent for consecutive shifts, you must call in each shift to ensure proper scheduling. The Ambulance Service will never presume consecutive days of absence for sickness, and always expects each employee to arrive for work on time, unless otherwise notified in accordance with this Policy.
- c. Employees that do not call in to indicate that they will be absent for three (3) consecutive days will be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment.

## **II. Tardiness.**

- a. Employees shall call in, at least four (4) hours in advance when possible, when they are going to be late.
- b. We understand that sometimes, lateness will be a sudden event (traffic accident, childcare issues, car troubles, etc.), and adequate notification is impossible. In these instances, as soon as you know that you will be late, you should notify the Shift Captain immediately.

## **III. Documentation and Penalties.**

- a. All absences and tardiness will be recorded in your “Personnel File” along with any advance notice that was or was not provided. Attendance records will be considered when evaluating completion of probation, requests for promotions and transfers, and as part of the annual review process.
- b. You may be subject to discipline for any unexcused absence or tardiness.

## **Emergency Leave Request**

**Purpose:** To accommodate full-time employees who desire a leave of absence to assist with relief efforts related to local, state, and federal emergencies or disasters, when requested by appropriate officials and/or emergency management agencies.



**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will accommodate full-time employees with legitimate urgent or emergent business that requires them to miss work for extended periods of time to the fullest extent possible, as long as the request may be granted without compromising operational needs.

**Procedure:**

**I. Background.**

- a. The Ambulance Service typically asks its full-time employees to provide advance notice when requesting the use of sick time, vacation time, personal time, or paid time off.
- b. The Ambulance Service recognizes that there are times when an emergency arises, and adequate advance notice cannot be given. This is especially applicable to persons who participate as part of emergency response teams ready to respond to any state or federal natural disaster. The Ambulance Service commends employees for participating in such programs and does not want to hinder your involvement or otherwise adversely affect your employment status as a result of that involvement.
- c. At the same time, since The Ambulance Service is itself an emergency service organization, we need to maintain adequate staffing at all times. We must have sufficient staff to meet our obligations to the public. Therefore, we may only grant emergency leave requests to the extent we can adequately maintain staff coverage here. In other words, not all leave requests may be honored if doing so may compromise our operations.

**II. Approval Process.**

- a. When an employee has a legitimate emergency situation that he or she knows will require an extended period of absence (other than military leave, family medical leave, or bereavement leave, which is covered in other policies), you should immediately discuss the need with the Director. Standard advance notice for leaves of absence will not be required.
- b. Where available, an employee may elect to use sick, personal, vacation, or paid time off that has been accumulated. Otherwise, the leave will be unpaid. Upon requesting the leave, you shall notify the Director of the desire to use any accumulated leave time.
- c. The employee requesting emergency leave should submit verification of the need for the leave with the request for the leave. (Example: documentation from the emergency management agency authorizing the employee's participation).
- d. Leave requests will be considered on a first come, first served basis and with consideration to the need to have you remain at the Company. Leaves will only be

granted if management concludes that adequate staffing can be maintained for day-to-day operations.

- e. The maximum period of leave shall be four (4) work weeks. Additional leave may be approved on a week-to-week basis, and/or in compliance with state and federal laws.
- f. If the leave request is granted, the Ambulance Service will hold the employee's position open until the employee returns from the leave up to a maximum four (4) week period. If additional leave is approved, the Ambulance Service may not be able to keep your position open.
- g. Employees should provide a brief report on their status and the anticipated need for continued leave on at least a weekly basis and provide contact information at the location where they can be reached.
- h. Employees will not be paid any wages when on leave, unless they are part of an authorized disaster response system which reimburses the employer for the wages of employees on emergency leave. If you are not specifically advised that you will be paid during the emergency leave assignment, you should assume that the leave is an unpaid leave.
- i. Any employee who does not follow this Policy and/or does not report to work as scheduled either prior to or after completion of an approved leave will be considered to have resigned his or her employment with the organization.
- j. All benefits paid by the employer will be maintained during the leave period, and the employee will be entitled to any benefits he/she would have ordinarily received had there been no emergency leave.

## **Probation**

**Purpose:** To ensure proper training of new employees so that they are properly acclimated to the organization and to determine if the mutual relationship between the Ambulance Service and the employee should continue.

**Policy:** All new employees will participate in a six (6) month probation period. The employee will be evaluated during this time, and at the end of the period a determination will be made as to whether the employment will continue.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Standards.**

- a. During the six (6) period, qualifications and abilities are carefully evaluated relative to work assignments and our environment. The Ambulance Service will provide employees with information about standards and expectations that are required for

each job. Employees are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarifications of policies and expectations.

- b. During the Probationary Period, all employees are expected to become familiar with Ambulance Service policies, including those outlined in this Handbook.
- c. By the conclusion of the probationary period all relevant training should be completed.
- d. At the conclusion of the Orientation Program, described below, the employee will meet with the Director or Operations Chief to discuss the continued employment of employee with the Ambulance Service. Successful completion of the Probationary Period and the Orientation Program training does not guarantee continued employment or alter in any way the at-will employment relationship.
- e. In the sole discretion of the Director, the Probationary Period may be extended by additional six (6) month periods.

### **Orientation Program**

**Purpose:** To help new employees become accustomed to the Ambulance Service and how it operates, and to ensure that they have the opportunity to learn all relevant Policies and Procedures.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will provide initial orientation training and will monitor new employee's performance during the six-month Probationary Period.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Standards.**

- a. The Orientation Program is designed to help all employees become familiar with essential operating procedures, patient care protocols, and policies of the Ambulance Service and runs concurrent with the six (6) Probationary Period.
- b. As part of the Orientation Program, all employees will receive information about the requirements of the position, compensation and benefits, policies, and other relevant information regarding both employment and patient care.
- c. During the Orientation Program, new employees are expected to attend all mandatory and other scheduled training sessions. Training sessions may include such topics as patient care, HIPAA and patient privacy, legal compliance, and other relevant patient care and employment related topics.

Employees are encouraged to ask questions about their employment or the policies of the Ambulance Service during any of the Orientation Programs. Even after the Orientation Program

and Introductory Period ends, employees are encouraged to voice their concerns and pose questions to their supervisor or other member of management.

### **Moonlighting/Outside Work**

**Purpose:** To prevent conflicts of interest, maintain a high level of patient care, and help ensure that the focus of an employee's work is with the Ambulance Service.

**Policy:** Any outside employment or volunteer service must be reported to management. At all times any outside employment or volunteer activities with another agency cannot interfere with job responsibilities at the Ambulance Service.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Standards.**

- a. Any employee engaged in or contemplating outside employment must divulge the relationship, or contemplated relationship to the Director.
  - 1. Employees are expected to devote full efforts to their employment with the Ambulance Service.
  - 2. The Ambulance Service will work with employees to coordinate second jobs that are necessary out of need and/or desire.
- b. Requests for outside employment shall be reviewed, and will generally be approved, when the outside employment:
  - 1. Does not conflict with responsibilities, including the ability to work overtime as required in your position. Specifically:
    - A. Any outside employment shall not take precedence over Ambulance Service employment.
    - B. Employees are not permitted to arrive late or leave early, to meet obligations with any outside employment.
    - C. Any outside employment or volunteering on behalf of a competitor, or service that regularly does business with the Ambulance Service may be disallowed, in accordance with the Conflict-of-Interest provisions of the "General Compliance" Policy.
  - 2. Does not interfere with job duties and expectations. Specifically:
    - A. Outside employment that affects the ability to perform job function (including the requirements that employees arrive for work well rested) will be denied.

- c. Employees that are granted a request to work outside employment, but where the outside employment interferes with their ability to complete job duties with the Ambulance Service, they may be asked to cease the outside employment, or make schedule changes.
- d. Employees that are denied a request to work outside employment, yet continue to do so, will be subject to discipline, including immediate termination of employment.
- e. To the extent that the outside employment is a home-business or other business that can be conducted by phone or computer, under no circumstances shall an employee be permitted to conduct such outside employment while on worktime with the Ambulance Service.

### **Performance Feedback & Goal Setting**

**Purpose:** To improve the quality of care that is provided to our patients through careful monitoring of employee performance, and to provide for wage increases to reward good job performance.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will evaluate its employees to identify strengths and weaknesses and establish goals, with the objective of improving overall job performance.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Job Description.**

- a. Each employee will receive a copy of his or her job description outlining the duties of that position. This includes new hires and individuals promoted to new positions within the Ambulance Service.
- b. Job descriptions are included as Attachments to this Handbook.

##### **II. Performance Review.**

- a. The Ambulance Service will periodically monitor employee performance and provide informal and formal feedback based on performance evaluation criteria. Performance Feedback and Goal Setting will usually be done:
  - 1. At the conclusion of the six (6) month probation period.
  - 2. As deemed necessary and appropriate by the Director.
  - 3. At least annually.

4. At both the six (6) and twelve (12) month anniversary of being transferred into a new assignment.
- b. The Director will review job descriptions with each employee during their annual performance evaluation. During that evaluation, the following will be discussed and considered:
  1. An action plan will be established, to address deficiencies or to assist the employee in meeting goals.
  2. Strengths, weaknesses, and areas that are in need of improvement will be discussed.
  3. An evaluation will be based upon actions as they relate to job duties, as well as interactions with other employees, patients, and other outside interactions.
  4. A review of any disciplinary actions, and appropriate course of action required in light of any disciplinary history may occur.
- c. Comments or disagreements with performance should be discussed openly during the review session.
- d. Periodic informal review may also occur. The Director, or Director's Designee, may provide regular verbal feedback to employees, as a means of continually monitoring performance and to serve as a resource for the employee.

### **Continuing Education Reimbursement Policy**

**Purpose:** To promote continuing education of all staff.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will evaluate its employees to identify strengths and weaknesses and establish goals, with the objective of improving overall job performance.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Permission:**

- a. All staff must apply for approval with the EMS Director prior to registering for any course they are expecting to use for reimbursement.
- b. The EMS Director may approve reimbursement on a first come first serve basis.
- c. The EMS Director may not approve more the 2 full time employees' to be off at any given time for any given course as to not interfere with the normal EMS operations.

- d. The EMS Director has the right to refuse approval at any time when it interferes with staffing or normal EMS operation.

## **II. Eligibility for EMS Certification Courses:**

- a. Only full-time employees are eligible for benefits hereunder.
- b. Benefits hereunder only apply to EMS certification courses or to classes associated with an EMT taking coursework necessary to become a paramedic
- c. Eligible and approved employees will receive straight time pay for hours in class if class time requires them to miss regularly scheduled work.
  - 1) There will be no reimbursement for travel time to and from classes or mileage related to travel
  - 2) Will replace regularly scheduled shifts or partial shifts with relief staff while in regularly scheduled class / labs only.
- d. Field internship must be scheduled around employee's regularly scheduled duty shifts
- e. Total eligible reimbursement will be limited to the actual cost of the Paramedic course, with reimbursement to be made upon successful completion of the required coursework, successful completion of NRMT testing for Paramedic, and receipt of IDPH certification as an Iowa Paramedic.
- f. The employee and employer shall execute an agreement in advance of employee being considered approved and eligible for the benefits set forth herein and must agree to remain in the FT employ of the Lee County EMS for a period of twenty-four (24) months following successful completion and certification as set forth within Paragraph (e) above. The agreement to provide that employee will be responsible to reimburse the employer in full if the employee does not meet the terms of the agreement.

## **IV. Eligibility for Continuing Education Reimbursement**

- a. Both full time and part time staff are eligible for continuing education reimbursement.
- b. Employee may apply for outside CEU course with the EMS Director and when approved may receive up to \$250.00 per year for outside CEU courses.
- c. Employee shall provide CEU credit to EMS Director after the course is successfully completed before receiving reimbursement for cost of course up to \$250.00 annually.
- d. Employee may apply for IEMSA annual conference with the EMS Director and when approved may receive up to \$500.00 biannually for conference attendance tuition reimbursement.
- e. Employee shall provide CEU credit to EMS Director after the conference is attended as proof of successful conference attendance prior to reimbursement of \$500.00 biannually.

## **V. Testing In Lieu of Continuing Education.**

- a. If an employee chooses biannual certification retesting, in lieu of continuing education, to maintain certification the employee is eligible for reimbursement of the testing fee not to exceed \$175.00
  1. Employee may apply for reimbursement through the EMS Director once the employee has successfully completed the testing and received their renewed certification. (Provide the receipt from testing and the renewal certification to the EMS Director to be eligible for reimbursement.)

### **Reporting to Work Well Rested**

**Purpose:** To maintain high levels of quality patient care by ensuring that employees are not overworked and are able to function effectively.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service requires that all employees report to duty well rested, and able to meet the needs of the public and patients that we serve.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **I. Standards.**

- a. Because we provide emergency patient care, keen judgment, skill, and safe performance of job duties are required at all times. To do this, all employees must report to work well-rested at the start of his or her scheduled shift.
- b. To the extent that a second job prohibits employees from being able to perform their duties for the Ambulance Service, because insufficient rest affects the quality of care, the employee may be asked to go home, and will not receive any pay for the remainder of the shift. Likewise, in situations where employees appear overtired or otherwise exhausted due to insufficient rest, for any reason whatsoever, and where patient care may be affected, the employee may be requested to return home, and be denied pay for the shift.
- c. In addition to other employment, employees are asked to schedule other personal outside activities appropriately, so as to be well rested and alert when reporting for duty.
- d. Insufficient rest and other symptoms of exhaustion can affect the ability to perform job duties and jeopardize the wellbeing of patients and co-workers. In the interest of maintaining a safe work environment, and our commitment to the highest level of patient care, we expect everyone's cooperation with this Policy.
- e. An employee who routinely arrives to work not well rested, or who shows signs of exhaustion such that patient care may be jeopardized may also face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



## **Trading Shifts and Maintaining Operational Coverage**

**Purpose:** To ensure adequate coverage of all work shifts when employees trade shifts with each other.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will permit employees to trade assigned shifts in limited situations, and only when following the steps of this Policy.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Background.**

- a. The Ambulance Service recognizes that at times, personal conflicts may arise in which a person cannot meet the obligations of his or her scheduled shift.
- b. Where such conflicts occur, employees may be able to trade or “swap” their shift with another employee as long as there is adequate coverage of the shift.

#### **II. Standards.**

- a. Any proposed trade must be presented to administration via the Ambulance Service’s scheduling software. Any trading will be subject to the following:
  1. Equal trading shall occur. An employee shall not expect another employee to cover part or an entire shift without covering an equal amount of time for that other employee.
  2. A trade of straight time for overtime shall not occur. But:
    - A. Exceptions may be made in extraordinary circumstances where a “swap” cannot occur, and overtime hours may be required (e.g., an emergency arises, and coverage is required for the last shift of the week).
    - B. Such an exception will be made by the supervisor.
  3. Trades in coverage must be made between persons who are equally qualified and certified to work the shift. For example, a Paramedic cannot trade with an EMT, since the EMT would not be qualified to meet the requirements of the Paramedic job duties.
- c. Management reserves the right to refuse to permit a trade to the extent that it will pose scheduling or other conflicts among employees. All proposed trades must be submitted through the Ambulance Service’s scheduling software’s trade request function. All trade requests must be submitted to the appropriate supervisor at least 24 hours prior to the first shift involved.

- d. Trades are not permitted unless the employees involved receive the approval of the supervisor. Employees engaged in unauthorized trading may be subject to disciplinary action and may be prohibited from entering into any other trades for a period of time.

## **Leave**

**Purpose:** To provide for sick leave, personal days, vacation, holidays, holiday pay, supplemental pay and bereavement leave for Ambulance Service Employees.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will compensate employees when off or on leave when sick, taking personal time off, or on a holiday, and/or when working on a holiday consistent with the following terms and provisions.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Background.**

- a. Employees of the Ambulance Service shall be entitled to Sick, Personal, Vacation and Holiday pay benefits as set forth below. These provisions shall supersede any similar or like provisions set out within the Lee County Personnel Policy

#### **II. Standards.**

##### **a. Sick Leave**

1. Regular full-time employees shall be entitled to earn sick leave.
2. Sick leave shall accrue at a rate of ten hours per month to a maximum of 1,000 hours sick leave. Should an employee go below the maximum number, he/she will again accrue at the above-mentioned rate.
3. Sick Leave may not be used until completion of the six-month probation period and Ambulance Service Orientation Program.
4. Sick Leave will be paid out to eligible employees at the rate of four (4) hours per month at their regular rate of pay.
  - A. To be eligible for the payout of sick leave an employee must be carrying the maximum accrual of sick leave and may not have used any sick leave during the month in question.
  - B. Sick leave will not be paid out, unless used for qualified sick leave purposes, in any other fashion during employment.

5. Employees shall notify the Shift Captain when they will be absent for reasons of illness and also provide the expected length of absence. The Director or Operations Chief may request reasonable evidence as it may desire confirming the necessity for sick leave. The Director or Operations Chief may request satisfactory, objective evidence from the employee's treating health care provider that an employee is able to return to work and perform his/her essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodation at the end of the sick leave. Sick leave may not be paid in advance and must be earned prior to the paid sick leave.
6. Sick leave shall be taken in increments of one-quarter (1/4) hour.
7. Employees shall not be paid for unused sick leave upon termination of employment.
8. Employees shall be entitled to sick leave with pay for absences resulting from illness, injuries (occurring on or off the job) or other temporary disability (i.e., inability to perform one's job duties, including pregnancy).
9. Sick leave is to be used for the employee's medical, dental or vision appointments that cannot be scheduled during non-working hours.
10. Sick leave may not be used for employee elective and/or cosmetic surgery. The determination of whether an employee's surgery is elective and/or cosmetic shall be made by the employee's health care professional. All sick leave, including eligible family sick leave allowed pursuant to Paragraph 11, immediately below hereto, must have the prior approval of the Department Head or his/her designee, except for emergency situations and the County may request reasonable evidence to confirm the necessity for sick leave and/or family sick leave
11. Sick leave may also be used for illness or injuries of the spouse, children or parent, i.e.: Family Sick Leave. Full-Time employees working 24-hour shifts may use up to 48 hours of family sick leave per year, calculated from the anniversary date of their employment.
  - A. Eligible employees, as described above, may use up to 48 hours of accrued sick leave over the course of each year of employment calculated from their anniversary date of employment, if the physical or mental illness, injury, or disability (including pregnancy) resulting in incapacity (i.e., inability to perform one's job duties) of the employee's spouse, child or parent requires the employee's physical presence for care or comfort of the spouse, child, or parent.
  - B. Family sick leave shall be taken in increments of one-quarter (1/4) hour.

- C. Employees shall not be paid for unused family sick leave upon termination of employment.

**b. Personal Leave**

1. Regular full-time employees shall be entitled to receive forty-eight hours of Personal Leave each year, based on the fiscal year.
2. Employees entitled to Personal Leave shall be awarded personal leave calculated and prorated from their date of hire through the end of the fiscal year.
3. Employees may use personal leave during their probationary period, but if the employee fails to complete the probationary period, the employee shall reimburse the County for personal leave used through withholding of such amount from the probationary employee's final paycheck. The probationary employee shall, upon hire, sign and provide to the County a written authorization permitting the County to withhold the leave reimbursement amount if the probationary employee fails to complete probation.
4. Personal leave should be scheduled as far in advance as possible and, in any case, any request must be made in a reasonable amount of time before the requested personal leave is to commence, except in the case of a personal emergency.
5. All personal leave must have the prior approval of the Director or his/her designee.
6. Personal leave shall be taken in increments of one (1) hour.
7. Personal leave must be taken within one (1) year of earning the personal leave.
8. Personal leave will not be allowed to carry over into the next year.
9. Employees shall not be paid for unused personal leave upon termination of employment.

**c. Vacation**

1. Regular full-time employees shall be entitled to earn vacation.

2. Vacation will be earned on a monthly basis based upon the employee's anniversary date (see Section 1.3 of the Lee County Personnel Policy) pursuant to the following schedule:

<b>Years of Continuous Service</b>	<b>Monthly Accrual Rate</b>	<b>Total Accrual Per Year</b>
Probationary Period & Year 1	4 hours per month	48 hours
Years 2-6	8 hours per month	96 hours
Years 7-9	12 hours per month	144 hours
Years 10-19	13.33 hours per month	160 hours
Years 20 and Over	16.66 hours per month	200 hours

3. Any hours accrued beyond 200 will not accrue and will be lost without additional time off, compensation, or any other benefit.

d. **Holidays and Holiday Pay**

1. The following holidays shall be recognized for all Ambulance Service employees, both full-time and part-time, unless decided upon differently by the board of supervisors:

New Year's Day	January 1
Presidents Day	Third Monday in February
Good Friday	Friday before Easter
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	4 <sup>th</sup> Thur., and 5 <sup>th</sup> Fri. in Nov.
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25

2. All non-exempt employees who work on a recognized holiday as noted above shall be compensated at time and one half of their regular hourly rate plus an additional one hour of holiday pay at their regular hourly rate of pay for every hour worked on a designated holiday. Full-Time non-exempt Employees who do not work on a designated holiday shall receive eight hours of holiday pay at their regular rate of pay. In order to be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must have been in the employ of the employer for not less than thirty (30) calendar days and must report for work on the last scheduled workday before the holiday and on the first scheduled workday after the holiday, and complete said shifts unless excused from doing so by their immediate supervisor or if on a protected leave of absence for one of those shifts. No employee who has been laid off or discharged, or who is under suspension will be eligible for holiday pay. (Holiday Pay Calculation Example: An employee, who has been in the employ of the employer for more than thirty calendar days, works from 6:00 pm on July 4<sup>th</sup> through 6:00 am on July 5<sup>th</sup>. The employee will be paid time and one-half for hours worked between 6:00 pm and midnight plus 6 hours of straight time holiday pay and will be paid six (6) hours of regular pay for the hours worked from midnight through 6:00 am, unless otherwise eligible for overtime based upon hours worked during said pay period.) Exempt employees are not entitled to holiday pay regardless of hours worked on any given holiday.

e. **Supplemental Pay**

1. Supplemental Pay shall be paid to Full-Time employees who have worked for the Employer consistent with the following:

<u>Required Period Completed</u>	<u>Amount Per Year</u>
5 Years	\$200.00
10 Years	\$300.00
15 Years	\$450.00
20 Years	\$550.00
25 Years	\$650.00

2. For purposes of this article, the number of years completed will be determined as of December 31 of each year.
3. The above sums will be added to the first paycheck of the affected employees in December of each year, commencing with the month of December following the employee's qualification.
4. In the event an eligible employee terminates prior to December 1, the employee will be paid a pro rata amount of the sum the employee would otherwise have been paid on December 1.

f. **Bereavement Leave**

1. Regular and full-time employees shall be entitled to bereavement leave. In the case of a death of a spouse or child, including step child, an employee shall be granted seventy-two (72) hours of paid bereavement leave which shall be taken commencing with the death of the spouse or child. The seventy-two (72) hours need not be used consecutively but must be used within one hundred twenty (120) days of the death of the spouse or child/step child.
2. In the case of the death of an immediate family member, an employee shall be granted forty-eight (48) hours of paid bereavement leave which shall be taken commencing with the death of the immediate family member. The forty-eight (48) hours need not be used consecutively but must be used within one hundred twenty (120) days of the death of the immediate family member.
3. A regular part-time employee who averages working one-half or more of the normal workweek of his/her department over the previous year shall be entitled to bereavement leave of up to seventy-two (72) hours on a prorated basis for a death of a spouse or child, including a step-child. This prorated bereavement leave is based on the average number of hours worked in the previous year calculated at the employee's last anniversary date.
4. A regular part-time employee who averages working one-half or more of the normal workweek of his/her department over the previous year shall be entitled to bereavement leave of up to forty-eight (48) hours on a prorated basis for the death of an immediate family member. This prorated bereavement leave is based on the average number of hours worked in the previous year calculated at the employee's last anniversary date.
5. Immediate family includes the employee's mother, father, step-parents, brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, (grandparent and grandchild include the employee's and spouses' grandparent or grandchild" or permanent member of the immediate household.
6. If a holiday falls within the paid bereavement leave, that holiday will be counted as a holiday rather than bereavement leave.
7. All bereavement leave must have the prior approval of the Director or Operations Chief. They should be notified of the need for bereavement leave and the relationship of the deceased as soon as possible.

## **Job Classifications / Step Pay Increases**

**Purpose:** To provide for Ambulance Service Job Classifications and “Step” Pay Increase.

**Policy:** The Ambulance Service will have three (3) specific Job Classifications, EMS Captain, Paramedic, and EMT, with both full time and part time positions in each classification, and “Step” Pay Increases will be in effect as set out below for said classifications.

### **Procedure:**

#### **I. Background.**

- a. Job descriptions, identified above, for each classification are attached hereto.
- b. Step Pay Increases shall apply to all classifications as set out below.

#### **II. Standards.**

- a. New regular full-time hourly employees will start at beginning pay for their pay classification. There are three (3) pay classifications, which may be updated yearly. Each pay classification has three (3) pay steps. New hourly employees will start at beginning pay as their pay classification. Employees may also receive an increase, which is determined on an annual fiscal year basis by the Lee County Board of Supervisors.
- b. After completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of employment each employee shall receive a step increase of 2% plus **20 cents**. In calculating step increases, applicable and relevant work experience that preceded employment with the employer will be considered with employee receiving an additional step increase of 20 cents per year of prior applicable and relevant work experience as determined in the discretion of the employer. The 2% step increase shall be calculated against the current rate of pay prior to adding the additional 20 cents per year step increase. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of employment each employee shall receive a step increase equal to 2% of their then current hourly rate of pay.
- c. Regular part-time hourly employees will start at beginning pay for their pay classification and shall be entitled to the same step pay increases as full-time staff as set out above.



# **Forms and Other Resource Materials**

1. Handbook Acknowledgement
2. Hepatitis B Vaccination Declination Form
3. Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Statement
4. Authorization for Reference Checks, Criminal History Checks and Drug and Alcohol Testing
5. Job Descriptions
6. Continuing Education Reimbursement Agreement

### **Handbook Acknowledgment**

This Personnel Handbook describes important information about the Lee County Ambulance Service, and I understand that I should consult with the Ambulance Director regarding any questions not answered in the Handbook and/or the Lee County Personnel Policy. I recognize that the Lee County Personnel Policy and this Handbook are not all-inclusive of the policies or procedures applicable to my employment with Lee County.

The information, Policies and benefits described in this Handbook are subject to change. Whenever possible, all such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies at any time and without any prior notice.

I have entered into my relationship with the Lee County Ambulance Service voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no guarantee of employment. Accordingly, either the Lee County Ambulance Service or I can terminate the relationship at any time. I understand that this Handbook is not a contract of employment and does not alter the “at-will” nature of my employment of membership where the “at-will” relationship already exists.

I have received the Handbook and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this Handbook and any revisions made to it.

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EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

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DATE

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EMPLOYEE NAME (TYPED OR PRINTED)

## **Hepatitis B Vaccination Declination Form**

**Sign and return this form only if you DO NOT want a hepatitis B vaccination.**

I understand that due to my occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials I may be at risk of acquiring hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. I have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, at no charge to myself. However, I decline hepatitis B vaccination at this time. I understand that by declining this vaccine, I continue to be at risk of acquiring hepatitis B, a serious disease. If in the future I continue to have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials and I want to be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, I can receive the vaccination series at no charge to me.

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name

## **Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Statement**

The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and the success of the Lee County Ambulance Service. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Patient Information
- Compensation Data
- Patient and Customer Lists
- Financial and Billing Information
- Marketing Strategies
- Pending Projects and Proposals

All personnel are required to respect the confidentiality of all proprietary or confidential information and are expected to not disclose such information to individuals outside of the Lee County Ambulance Service. We may require our personnel to sign a non-disclosure agreement as a condition of membership or employment. Personnel who improperly use or disclose any confidential information (including confidential business information or patient information) will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion and termination.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

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PRINTED NAME

**Authorization for Reference Checks, Criminal History Checks and  
Drug and Alcohol Testing**

I understand that Lee County Emergency Medical Services will conduct a background and reference check as part of the application for employment process which may include a review of public records and inquiries of my former employers and references I have provided regarding my qualifications and suitability for employment, as to verify any information I have provided during the application process. As part of this inquiry, I understand that the Service will obtain a criminal history report and driver's license history, from applicable law enforcement agencies, or, in some cases, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and that applicable state law may prohibit the employment of persons convicted of certain crimes. I also understand that the application process includes a Drug and Alcohol test, which may also be conducted at various times throughout my employment.

I hereby authorize all my listed references to release to the Ambulance Service any information regarding my work and volunteer experience, including, but not limited to performance of expected duties and disciplinary information.

I hereby authorize the Service to conduct this background and reference check, as well as a Drug and Alcohol screening as part of the application process, and I release from liability the Service and its representatives for seeking, gathering, and using such information. I also release any individual or entity from any liability whatsoever for providing the Service with any information concerning my qualifications and suitability for employment, including any former employer and personal references I have identified on the application.

I authorize the Service to send a copy of this authorization to my listed references or anyone else contacted by the Company to provide information about me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
  
\_\_\_\_\_