



The Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act (PPAEMA)

Overview: On February 5, 2026, the DEA finalized rules that change how EMS agencies must manage **controlled substances**. Those DEA Rules take effect on March 9, 2026. This is a federal shift that affects all EMS agencies across the United States.

NOTICE: Maine EMS does not enforce or interpret federal rules or statutes and is unable to provide legal advice. For more information on how the contents of this informational document impact you and your circumstances, please consult your own legal counsel. This document is provided by Maine EMS for informational purposes only. The requirements described below are from **Federal Regulations** established by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

BACKGROUND

In 2017, Congress passed the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act. This act amended the federal Controlled Substances Act (CSA), created in 1970. The CSA, prior to the PPAEMA, did not address the unique needs of controlled substance use in emergency medical services settings, such as administration of the medication outside the physical presence of a prescriber (MD, DO, PA, NP), and the unique storage circumstances of EMS (i.e., storage in a moving ambulance). The PPAEMA amended the CSA to allow for DEA registration for EMS Agencies, to allow for the use of a standing order to administer controlled substances, and to modify the storage, recordkeeping, and restocking requirements of the CSA to suit Emergency Medical Service Operations.¹

In October of 2020, the DEA proposed a rule, "Registering Emergency Medical Services Agencies Under the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017", which would implement the PPAEMA. Public comment on that proposed rule closed in December of 2020.

On February 5, 2026, the DEA finalized its rule implementing the PPAEMA, effective as of **March 9, 2026**.

How This Could Impact a Maine EMS Agency

- The DEA now has a registration category specifically designed for EMS Agencies that handle controlled substances. Your EMS Service may now be required under the

¹ [https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/php/publications/protecting-patient-access-to-emergency-medications-act.html#:~:text=The%20federal%20Controlled%20Substances%20Act,Drug%20Enforcement%20Administration%20\(DEA\).](https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/php/publications/protecting-patient-access-to-emergency-medications-act.html#:~:text=The%20federal%20Controlled%20Substances%20Act,Drug%20Enforcement%20Administration%20(DEA).)



Controlled Substances Act to register and come into compliance with the DEA's rules.

- The DEA Final Rule provides a definition of a "Medical Director" as "a physician who is registered under 21 U.S.C. 823(g) and provides medical oversight to an emergency medical services agency." This may impact an EMS Agency that does not have a physician as its service-level medical director.
- This Final Rule implements a three (3)-year registration, with a fee of \$888.00.
- This rule implements new requirements for delivery, storage, and record keeping related to the handling of controlled substances. These new rules may require EMS agencies to modify their current practices.

Where to Get Information

Because this is a **federal rule**, Maine EMS encourages all potentially impacted Service Directors/Chiefs to consult the following primary sources:

1. **DEA Diversion Control Division:** <https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov>
 - Use this site to apply for an "EMS Agency" registration (Form 224).
 - This site has several guidance documents and manuals, such as the Provider Manual, that may more specifically address questions on what the registration process may look like.
2. **Federal Register Notice (2026-02288):**
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/05/2026-02288/registering-emergency-medical-services-agencies-under-the-protecting-patient-access-to-emergency>
 - Read the full text of the rule and the DEA's responses to public comments.
3. **Local DEA Field Office:**
 - Contact the New England Field Division for specific questions at (617) 557-2100.

Immediate Action Items

- **Review** the federal requirements directly from the [DEA website](#).
- **Determine** if your agency is impacted by this change.
- **Address** how your agency will come into compliance with the DEA's requirements.
- **Questions:** For questions regarding the DEA's requirements or how they impact your agency please consult the DEA or independent legal resources.

Maine EMS is providing this briefing as a service to our community. We do not, and cannot, provide any legal advice regarding federal compliance.