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OPERATIONAL BULLETIN

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Bulletin #	Title		Date Issued
#2026-09-24-01	Written Driver Training Program SOG(s)/SOP(s)		September 24, 2026
Superseded	Released By:	Source:	Pages
N/A	Maine EMS	Rules	5
Approved By:	Wil O’Neal, Maine EMS Director		
Overview: In 2024, Maine EMS’s Rules were amended to require that Ambulance and Non-transporting Emergency Medical Services establish a written driver training program and/or standard operating procedure(s) for the operation of vehicles licensed by Maine EMS. As part of the upcoming service licensure renewal application, Maine EMS will collect written driver training program/standard operating procedure documents.			

Background

Maine EMS's Rules for Ambulance and Non-transporting Emergency Medical Services were amended on June 25, 2024, adding a requirement for a ground ambulance service or non-transporting service to establish a written driver training program and/or standard operating procedure(s) ("SOP") for the operation of Ambulances and Emergency Medical Service Vehicles licensed by Maine EMS.

Summary and Explanation of Change

The Rule now requires a service to have a written driver training program and/or SOP that addresses the following topics, with some specificity:

- Use of Seatbelts
- Emergency Vehicle Response
- Valid State Driver's Licensure
- Initial Training
- Service Administrator or Designee Review
- Record Keeping

A single program document, or a combination of program document(s) and SOP(s) may be used to demonstrate compliance with this rule requirement in the service-licensure initial or renewal application.

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Guidance

A service may use the following references to develop the required components of a driver training program and/or SOP(s); these include areas of Maine EMS's Rules, Protocols, and industry best practices.

Use of Seatbelts

A training program and/or SOP must address the use of seat belts. This is consistent with the Maine Department of Labor's rules, Chapter 7: *Minimum Driver Training Requirements For Fire Apparatus*².

Maine EMS's Protocols¹ require that all non-clinical persons must be restrained in the ambulance, and that clinical providers must be restrained unless there is a significant impact on patient care. It is best practice for an individual in a vehicle licensed by Maine EMS to wear a seat belt while the vehicle is being operated, as much as practicable, while accomplishing patient care. When developing a training program or SOP, a service should ensure that its program and/or SOP(s) address the use of seat belts by clinical and non-clinical persons while a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle is being operated.

Emergency Vehicle Response

A training program and/or SOP must address and be consistent with the rule(s) surrounding the operation of a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle on emergency and non-emergency medical calls. The training program and/or SOP should identify best practices. For example, some best practices contained within Maine EMS's protocols surrounding the safe response and transport of patients are¹:

- Reserving the use of lights/sirens to the transport of time-sensitive conditions;
- Consideration of road and weather conditions when determining response priority and transport; and
- Securing all objects when the vehicle is in motion.

Maine EMS's Rules, Chapter 3, § 15³, sets the requirements for a service to operate a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle. This Rule requires a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle to operate in non-emergency response mode⁴ to the dispatched location, unless dispatch or responding personnel lack sufficient information to determine whether persons at the scene require emergency medical treatment. This Rule requires a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle to operate in a non-emergency response mode from the scene of a call to a hospital, or during the transfer of a patient from a hospital or healthcare facility to another place unless the EMS provider responsible for the care of the patient determines that a threat to the patient's life or limb exists and necessitates emergency response mode⁴.

Operator Requirements for Program Participation

A training program and/or SOP must require participating Operators have a valid state driver's license, or qualify for an exemption under Title 29-A of the Maine Revised Statutes.

Initial Training

A training program and/or SOP must acknowledge that a service cannot permit the operator of a Maine EMS-licensed vehicle to operate independently during patient transport and/or in emergency response mode, until the following requirements have been met:

- The Operator possesses active licensure from the Emergency Medical Services Licensing Board prior to operating in emergency mode or during patient transport;
- The operator has reviewed all applicable sections of 29-A M.R.S. This review may occur as part of an Ambulance Vehicle Operator Course, and a written training program and/or SOP may contemplate that this review occurs as part of satisfying that requirement. Applicable provisions are, at a minimum (but not limited to)⁵:
 - 29-A M.R.S. Chapter 1: General Provisions,
 - 29-A M.R.S. Chapter 19, Subchapter 1: Rules of the Road, and
 - 29-A M.R.S. Chapter 19, Subchapter 2: Violations
- The operator has completed on-road driving skills with a service's designee, including the operation of the vehicle in emergency response mode and non-emergency response mode. This initial training may also include roadway familiarization and navigation.
- The operator has been evaluated for proficiency, knowledge, and the proper operation of the specific vehicle(s) and their equipment, and has successfully passed that evaluation.
 - An evaluation for the proficiency and knowledge related to the operation of a specific vehicle may be demonstrated by: successful completion of an Ambulance Vehicle Operator Course, or approved equivalent; a practical evaluation completed using a skills evaluation form such as: Bureau of Labor Standards, Volunteer Fireman Insurance Services, Maine Municipal Association, or other²; or a combination of those.
 - Recommended topic areas relevant to the proper operation of the specific vehicle's equipment include (as applicable), but are not limited to:
 - The activation, deactivation, and appropriate use of light/sirens equipment, including preemption devices;
 - Vehicle functions and features, including the activation of power to equipment, locking and unlocking mechanisms, and/or environmental management functions;
 - Use and/or operation of dashboard cameras and navigation equipment;
 - Use and/or operation of radio/cellular communication equipment; and
 - Use and/or operation of mechanisms related to the securing or latching of equipment carried within the vehicle;
- The operator has successfully completed an Ambulance Vehicle Operator Course, or a course that has been approved by the Board as an equivalent. The Maine EMS policy regarding Ambulance Vehicle Operator Course(s) is available at:
<https://www.maine.gov/ems/sites/maine.gov/ems/files/inline-files/20240701-MEMS-AVOC-Policy.pdf>

Service Administrator Review

A training program and/or SOP must include that the Service's Director or designee reviews all of its Operator's motor vehicle driving history, on an annual basis.

Record Keeping

A training program and/or SOP must include that the Service will maintain a record of the above training, and will make those records available upon Maine EMS's request. These records include, but are not limited to:

- A record documenting the initial training of the Operator, including that Operator's specific evaluation for proficiency, knowledge, and the proper operation of the specific vehicle(s) and equipment;
- A record documenting a valid state's driver's licensure or exemption under Title 29-A
- A record documenting the review of all its operators' motor vehicle driving history annually.

A service is not required to maintain a separate record for each of the above items, but is recommended to address each of these items within its records.

Citations

1. 2025 Maine EMS Prehospital Protocols
 - a. Grey 28(5) – “Consider road and weather conditions when determining response priority and transport.”
 - b. Grey 28(7) – “Reserve lights and sirens when transporting time sensitive conditions (MI, stroke, multi-trauma, etc.)”
 - c. Grey 28(8) – “Secure all objects when an ambulance is in motion.”
 - d. Grey 28(10) – “EMS clinicians should utilize safety restraints at all times unless this significantly impacts patient care. When clinician safety restraints need to be removed, consider timing and road conditions and notify the driver that clinician restraints are not in use.”
 - e. Grey 28(11) - “Non-EMS clinicians should be properly restrained at all times.”
2. 12-179 C.M.R. [C.M.R. means Code of Maine Rules] Ch. 7 – Minimum Driver Training Requirements for Fire Apparatus
 - a. “All Maine Fire Departments must...have written SOPs/Policy for...4. Use of seatbelts”.
 - b. Section II. Apparatus Driver Training Requirements
 - i. “D. Apparatus drivers' skills must be evaluated on each vehicle they will drive using a skills evaluation form such as: Bureau of Labor Standards (BLS), Volunteer Fireman Insurances Services (VFIS), Maine Municipal Association (MMA) or other.”
3. 16-163 C.M.R. Ch. 3 – Ground Ambulance Service and Non-Transporting Service Licenses
 - a. “§ 15. Vehicle Operation
 - i. 1. A licensed ground ambulance vehicle or authorized emergency medical services vehicle shall operate in a non-emergency response mode to a location to which the ambulance or emergency medical services vehicle has been dispatched except when:
 1. A. Dispatch or responding personnel do not have adequate information to determine the existence or condition of persons at a scene who may require emergency medical treatment; or,
 2. B. The ambulance or emergency medical services vehicle is responding in accordance with a Maine-EMS-approved Response Assignment Plan.

4. 16-163 C.M.R. Ch. 2 – Definitions
 - a. § 11. **EMERGENCY MEDICAL CALL** means any event which is perceived to threaten the life, limb, or well-being of an individual in such a manner that a need for emergency medical treatment is created.
 - b. § 20. **EMERGENCY RESPONSE MODE** means the operation of the ambulances or emergency medical services vehicle's warning lights and siren in accordance with the Maine Motor Vehicle Statutes, 29-A M.R.S.
 - c. § 30. **NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL CALL** means a situation in which an immediate response to the scene, hospital, health care facility or other place is not required to prevent life or limb threatening medical deterioration of a person.
 - d. § 31. **NON-EMERGENCY RESPONSE MODE** means the operation of the ambulance or emergency medical services vehicle in a non-emergency mode obeying all traffic laws.
5. Maine EMS Policy 2022-04-13-01 “Policy on Ambulance Vehicle Operator Courses”
 - a. Appendix A: Criteria for Course Equivalency with Maine Title 32 and Maine EMS Rules
 - i. E. Contains an ambulance module or covers the following didactic material with specific reference to ambulance vehicles:
 1. xi. Maine Title 29 Review,
 - a. 1. Chapter 1: General Provisions,
 - b. 2. Chapter 19, Subchapter 1: Rules of the Road, and
 - c. 3. Chapter 19, Subchapter 2: Violations