

All EMS personnel must be familiar with the various Federal, Provincial, Municipal, and local laws, regulations, and Regional Health Authority policies affecting the operation of an ambulance and a designated emergency medical services vehicle.

GENERAL

- in order to operate a vehicle registered as an ambulance or designated emergency medical services vehicle the operator must
 - be at least 18 years of age
 - possess a valid Class 4 or higher driver's license
 - be licensed under the provisions of the Manitoba Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transport Act and Regulation
 - be familiar with local policies
 - be familiar with the operation of all communication devices and local policies regarding communications
- local policies must state that no one shall be permitted to operate an ambulance or designated emergency medical services vehicle
 - if they have been consuming alcohol in the 24 hours prior to operating the ambulance or designated emergency services vehicle
 - are taking drugs or medications, either prescription or non-prescription, that preclude the operation of machinery, could affect motor skills, or could impair judgement
 - are incapable of operating such a vehicle due to illness, injury, or fatigue
- under the Provincial Highway Traffic Act, ambulances and designated emergency medical services vehicles may proceed through a controlled intersection against a red traffic control light or stop sign only if it is safe to do so
 - all ambulances and designated emergency medical services vehicles must come to a full stop at all red traffic control lights and stop signs before proceeding through the intersection, and should only enter the intersection when it is safe to do so
 - ambulances and designated emergency medical services vehicles must utilize their emergency lights and warning signals when proceeding through an intersection against a red traffic control light or stop sign, or at any time they are contravening the normal operating rules under the Provincial Highway Traffic Act
- Local policies must be established on speed limits for ambulances and designated emergency medical service vehicles
 - these vehicles may not, under any circumstances, be driven faster than twenty (20) kilometers per hour above the posted speed limit with a maximum speed of no more than one hundred and twenty (120) kilometers per hour
 - speed should be reduced accordingly due to road, traffic, weather, and patient conditions
- the vehicle should be operated utilizing defensive driving techniques focusing on due care and consideration of other drivers, pedestrians, passengers and patients

GENERAL: Emergency Vehicle Operation

- Upon leaving an incident scene, the operator must immediately communicate with dispatch that the ambulance is en route and to which facility. The operator will take the patient to the stated facility unless otherwise directed by triage protocol or dispatcher.
- The use of any communication device while driving an ambulance is restricted to the fleet net radio or (if equipped) fixed mount cellular phone, and only for the purposes of essential communication with either dispatch, the receiving center, on-line medical control (if available), or other required and approved EMS communication. All forms of communication should be kept to a minimum while driving.
- No EMS staff may, at any time, use mobile/cellular phones for personal calls while driving an ambulance.
- ambulances and designated emergency medical services vehicles may be driven in an emergency mode only when
 - dispatched as such to a known situation requiring this level of emergent response
 - dispatched to an unknown situation potentially requiring this level of emergent response
 - the patient's condition requires emergent transport (i.e. lights and siren) to advanced medical care
- every person must wear seat belts in the ambulance or designated emergency medical services vehicle unless they are actively treating a patient
 - seat belts should still be worn during patient care if at all possible
- no smoking is permitted in any ambulances or designated emergency medical services vehicles
- EMS personnel should not eat while in the ambulance or emergency services vehicle
- ambulances and designated emergency medical service vehicles must be operated in a careful and controlled manner
 - rapid accelerations, heavy or hard braking, decelerating, and radical maneuvering of the vehicle are not acceptable practices
- when transporting a patient the vehicle operator must adjust the speed and handling of the vehicle so as to provide as smooth a transport as possible
 - this not only minimizes any detrimental effects of the transport but will provide a safe environment for the treating EMS personnel to attend to the patient

NOTE

- even though the Provincial Highway Traffic Act allows the driver of an emergency vehicle certain privileges it does not excuse the driver from exercising due care, caution, consideration and common sense when operating the emergency vehicle
 - the operator of the emergency vehicle could be held liable if deemed responsible for an accident or injury
- the ambulance operator is responsible to operate the ambulance or dedicated emergency response vehicles within the limits of his or her own licensure, the limits of the road conditions, the mechanical limitations of the vehicle, and environmental limitations
- the ambulance operator is the "final authority" as to whether a particular response or transport can be safely carried out and should refuse any requests or orders to initiate a trip that he/she feels is unsafe.