

	Z09.1	<i>Emergency Medical Services Branch</i>
	2016-05-20	<b>Emergency Vehicle Operation</b>

To promote and sustain a safe driving culture and to promote safety for all persons and property in EMS, all EMS personnel must comply with the various Federal, Provincial, Municipal, and local laws, regulations, and Regional Health Authority policies affecting the operation of an ambulance or a designated emergency medical services (EMS) vehicle.

### General

In order to operate a vehicle registered as an ambulance or designated emergency medical services (EMS) vehicle the operator must:

- be a minimum of 18 years of age
- possess a current valid Manitoba Class 4 driver's license
- possess a current and valid EMS personnel license under the provisions of the Manitoba Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transport Act and Regulation
- ensure awareness and compliance with Provincial EMS policies
- be familiar with the operation of all EMS voice communication devices and ensure compliance with Provincial law and EMS service licence holder policies regarding voice communications
- ensure familiarity and compliance with the Manitoba Highway Traffic Act at all times
- be in compliance with all Provincial and Service policies, standards protocols, procedures and legislation

### Operation of an ambulance vehicle or dedicated emergency response vehicle

Section 106 of the *Manitoba Highway Traffic Act* permits the driver of an emergency vehicle certain privileges. The *Act* does not excuse the driver from exercising due care, caution, consideration and common sense when operating the emergency vehicle. The operators of EMS vehicles bear the sole responsibility for driving safely, with due regard and could be held liable if deemed responsible for an accident or injury.

Starting in 2014, the Provincial ambulance fleet vehicles are equipped with an ambulance vehicle monitoring system. The ambulance vehicle monitoring system is capable of tracking, recording and reporting ambulance driving operations.

Starting in 2015, the Provincial fleet ambulances will be equipped with an audible notification system. The audible notification system will provide reminders to ambulance operators when speeds or driver handling of the ambulance vehicle are outside of pre determined acceptable ranges.

When transporting a patient the ambulance 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. The safe transport, arrival and patient welfare shall always have priority while en route to a dispatched call or to a receiving facility.

### Responsibilities of ambulance crew - vehicle operator

- emergency services vehicles must be operated within the limits of his or her own vehicle operators licensure, road conditions, mechanical limitations of the vehicle, and environmental conditions
- emergency services vehicles must be operated using defensive driving techniques focusing on due care caution, common sense and consideration of other drivers, pedestrians, passengers and patients
- the vehicle 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

- speed must be adjusted / reduced according to road, traffic, weather, and patient condition
- EMS personnel must operate the vehicles in a careful and controlled manner; excessive speed, rapid accelerations, heavy or hard braking, decelerating, and radical maneuvering of the vehicle are not acceptable practice
- EMS personnel may drive in an emergency mode only when:
  - dispatched as such to an emergent priority primary call or interfacility transfer
  - the patient's condition requires emergent transport (i.e. lights and siren)
- when operating the vehicle in non-emergency mode EMS personnel must:
  - operate within posted speed limits
  - respect all traffic control signs and signals
- EMS personnel and all passengers, when an ambulance is in motion, must be secured by a seatbelt. In certain circumstances it may be necessary for EMS personnel to remove their seatbelt to provide patient care, in these situations they must perform only the interventions or care requiring EMS personnel to leave their seat and immediately return to a seat belted position
- use of a communications device while operating a vehicle is restricted to essential communication with either dispatch, the receiving facility, on-line medical control, or other required and approved EMS communication:
  - all forms of approved EMS communication should be kept to a minimum
  - use of mobile cellular, or personal electronic devices is restricted to voice communication for EMS operational purposes only
  - refer to section 215 of the *Highway Traffic Act* for additional information
- never operate an ambulance or other vehicle:
  - while under the influence of alcohol or while taking drugs or medications, either prescription or non-prescription, that preclude the operation of machinery, could affect motor skills, could impair judgment or could cause endangerment to any other person in any way
  - while at risk for impaired judgment or reflexes due to illness, injury or fatigue

#### Responsibilities of ambulance crew - patient attendant

- the ambulance crew member responsible for patient care must at all times remain with the patient in the patient care compartment of an ambulance vehicle during transport

#### Responsibilities of EMS service licence holder

- service license holders must have written policy and procedures which describes the authorized practices for operating an ambulance or EMS response vehicle by their employees or designates
  - written policies must include but are not limited to the employer and vehicle operators' roles and responsibilities included in this Standard (Z09.1) and the *Highway Traffic Act*

#### **Smoking**

Smoking or use of "E" cigarettes or similar products is not permitted in any ambulances or designated emergency medical services vehicles.