

Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for EMS Providers

- I. **POLICY:** Professional Conduct & Code of Ethics for EMS Providers
- II. **PURPOSE AND STANDARD:** To define the Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics expected of all EMS Providers Licensed by the State of Utah.
- III. **POLICY SCOPE:** Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for EMS Providers who are licensed by the State of Utah is not all encompassing, but is a framework for all Licensed EMS Providers to adhere to, regardless of status (student, layperson, or professional). Actions and behavior that erode trust of the public and degrades the profession cannot be accepted or tolerated. The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness (BEMSP) is committed to ensuring that EMS Providers who are licensed by the State of Utah are committed professionals who the public can rely on during their time of need. Complaints against a licensed provider may be filed by anyone. Complaints can be filed with the Bureau of EMS regarding the behavior and/or actions of EMS Providers, regardless of status, if deemed to have violated this policy. All complaints received will be investigated pursuant to Administrative Rule 426-5-3300 (<https://adminrules.utah.gov/public/search/EMS/Current%20Rules>). The complaint process and form can be found at <https://bemsp.utah.gov/regulations/compliance/>.
- IV. **Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics for EMR, EMT, AEMT, EMT-IA, and Paramedic**
 - (1) **Professional Conduct**
 - a. **Respect for Human Dignity** – The basis of ethical principles and means considering other people as being worthy of high regard including respecting the uniqueness of each individual. Respect all patients regardless of socioeconomic status, financial status or background unrestricted by consideration of nationality, race, creed, color, or status.
 - b. **Maintain Confidentiality** – Respect every person’s right to privacy. Sensitive information regarding a patient’s condition or history should only be provided to medical personnel with an immediate need-to-know. Providers are expected to know HIPAA guidelines and abide by HIPAA regulations in their professional practice. Sensitive information regarding our profession may only be provided to those with a right to know.
 - c. **Professional Competency** – Provide the patient with the best possible care by continuously improving your understanding of the profession and maintaining continuing education and required certifications. Protect the patient from incompetent care by knowing the standard of care and being able to identify and report those who do not.

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d. **Safety Awareness & Practice** – Protect the health and well-being of the patient, yourself, your co-workers and the community by constantly following safety guidelines, principles and practices. Providers should not participate in, or attempt to conceal misconduct of a colleague, or attempt to discourage anyone from disclosing information about situations which may be illegal or harmful to the patient or the public.

e. **Accountability for Your Actions** – Act within your training, know your limitations, and accept responsibility for both satisfactory and unsatisfactory actions. Providers should refuse to participate in unethical activities, or to allow personal interests, such as economic gain, recognition, power or promotion to influence their decisions or advice.

f. **Loyalty & Cooperation** – Demonstrate devotion by maintaining confidentiality, assisting in improving morale and not publicly criticizing patients, other EMS Providers, EMS Agencies, or other health care practitioners.

g. **Personal Conduct** – Demonstrate professionalism by maintaining a high level of moral and ethical standards. EMS Providers will act in a responsible and professional manner that does not discredit, dishonor, or embarrass an EMS organization, co-workers, other health care practitioners, patients, individuals or the community at large.

(2) Code of Ethics (Applies to ALL Prehospital Providers)

Professional status as a licensed EMS Provider in Utah is maintained and enriched by the willingness of the individual practitioner to accept and fulfill obligations to society, other medical professionals, and the profession of Emergency Medical Technician.

a. As an EMS Provider licensed within the State of Utah, I solemnly pledge myself to the following code of professional ethics:

i. A fundamental responsibility of the EMS Provider is to conserve life, to alleviate suffering, to promote health, to do no harm, and to encourage the quality and equal availability of emergency medical care.

ii. The EMS Provider provides services based on human need, with respect for human dignity, unrestricted by consideration of nationality, race, creed, color or status.

iii. The EMS Provider does not use professional knowledge and skills in any enterprise detrimental to the public well-being.

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- iv. The EMS provider respects and holds in confidence all information of a confidential nature obtained in the course of professional work unless required by law to divulge such information.
- v. The EMS Provider, as a citizen, understands and upholds the law and performs the duties of citizenship; as a professional, the EMS Provider has the never-ending responsibility to work with concerned citizens and other healthcare professionals in promoting a high standard of emergency medical care to all people.
- vi. The EMS Provider shall maintain professional competence and demonstrate concern for the competence of other members of the EMS healthcare team.
- vii. An EMS Provider assumes responsibility in defining and upholding standards of professional practice and education.
- viii. The EMS Provider assumes responsibility for individual professional actions and judgment, both in all aspects of emergency functions, and knows and upholds the laws which affect the practice of the EMS provider
- ix. An EMS Provider has the responsibility to be aware of and participate in matters of legislation affecting the EMS System.
- x. The EMS Provider, or groups, who advertise professional service, does so in conformity with the dignity of the profession
- xi. The EMS Provider has an obligation to protect the public by not delegating to a person less qualified, any service which requires the professional competence of an EMS professional.
- xii. The EMS Provider will work harmoniously with and sustain confidence in EMS Providers, the nurses, the physicians, and other members of the EMS healthcare team.
- xiii. The EMS Provider refuses to participate in unethical procedures and assumes responsibility to expose incompetence or unethical conduct of others to the appropriate authority in a proper and professional manner.

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b. The following are examples of conduct during the provision of daily responsibilities, patient care, and/or transport that may result in investigation of an EMS individual's license or a provider's license or designation pursuant to R426-5-3300 (2).

- i. Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property.
- ii. Falsification of personal or hospital records
- iii. Functioning under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or medications which may impair judgement or capability.
- iv. Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- v. Fighting or threatening violence
- vi. Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of property
- vii. Violation of safety or health rules that threatens the safety of patients within their care
- viii. Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- ix. Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, i.e. explosives or illegal firearms
- x. Unauthorized access and/or disclosure of confidential information
- xi. Misrepresentation of an individual's level of licensure
- xii. Performing procedures or skills beyond the level of an individual's EMS licensure or provider's licensure
- xiii. violation of laws pertaining to medical practice, drugs, or controlled substances

(3) Complaints regarding EMS Providers actions and/or behaviors (on or off duty) received by the Department that can be interpreted as possible violations of Professional Conduct and/or Code of Ethics for EMS Providers;

- a. must be received in writing; and
- b. if deemed to be a potential violation, will be investigated pursuant to R426-5-3300.
- c. EMS providers who are found to have violated the Professional Conduct or Code of Ethics will be subject to license suspension and/or revocation.