


GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Health Emergency Preparedness
and Response Administration

Memorandum

To: All EMS Ambulance Services and Educational Institutions

From: 
Beverly Pritchett,
Senior Deputy Director, HEPRA

Date: 13 April 2009

Subject: Transition to NREMT Certification Requirement

The Emergency Medical Services Act of 2008 has completed the requisite period of Congressional review and has become a D.C. Law. According to the DC Council website, the Act bears D.C. Law No. 17-357, and its official effective date is 25 March 2009. As we have indicated in the past, 90 days after the law was effective we would institute a requirement for all EMS providers to obtain National Registry certification. This will go into effect on 01 July 2009. Let me take a few minutes to give you an overview of how this will be implemented, and what it will mean to you as a provider.

Beginning on 01 July 2009, all EMS providers will need to present a valid NREMT certification card in order to receive a District of Columbia EMS certification card. This will apply to all new certification requests as well as to renewals of existing District EMS certifications. This does not mean every EMS provider in the District must have a NREMT card on 01 July 2009. What it does mean is that you must have one by the time your District certification is ready for renewal. For example, if your District certification card expires on 30 November 2010, you have until 30 November 2010 in which to obtain your NREMT certification.

Also beginning on 01 July 2009 the District Department of Health, HEPRA, will no longer be administering a District certification or recertification exam. EMS providers will not have the option of taking the District exam or the NREMT exam after 30 June 2009. The NREMT certification will be the District standard.

EMT-Basic

The biggest impact of this new policy is at the EMT-Basic certification level. The EMT-Basic is also the certification level with our largest number of providers. In the past, EMT-Basic providers have never had to have NREMT certification. In order to avoid an undue burden on these providers, the District announced almost two years ago that it would be transitioning to the NREMT certification model. Based on the model outlined above, it will be two more years before all of our providers have their NREMT certification; in effect a nearly four year transition period.

For the foreseeable future, DOH-HEPRA will continue to issue first extensions on District EMT-B certifications. The request must come from the provider's sponsoring EMS agency, and the request must be submitted before the provider's card expires. We will consider second extensions only under the most extenuating circumstances. Please be aware that the NREMT does not issue extensions on their certifications.

Once a provider's District certification card expires they cannot receive an extension. The provider's District certification card can be reinstated provided they meet all of the recertification requirements within one year of the certification's expiration date.

For the EMT-Basic provider that is requesting reciprocity certification in the District after 01 July 2009, they must present a valid NREMT certification card at the time of their application. Reciprocity applications will not be accepted without a copy of a valid National Registry card.

EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic

At this time there is no major change in either the certification or renewal process. As has been standing policy of DOH-HEPRA, all EMT-Is and EMT-Ps must have a valid NREMT certification card at the time of the application.

The single biggest change at the ALS level concerns providers renewing their District certification. In the past an ALS provider could let their NREMT certification expire once they obtained their District certification. This will no longer be the case after 01 July 2009. All of our ALS providers must now present a valid NREMT certification when they submit their renewal application. As with the EMT-Basic, an application that does not have a copy of a valid NREMT certification card will not be accepted.

Conclusion

This letter is to give you an overview of what will be occurring beginning 01 July 2009. We are working on creating the rules that will codify the basic procedures we have outlined above. As always, we will be keeping you aware of the new rules and we want to hear your feedback on the drafts we supply to you.

This is an exciting time for EMS in the District. We want to thank you for all of the assistance you have given us, and we are looking forward to moving EMS in the District forward with your help.