



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THIRD PARTY PROVIDER

Year after year, the District's Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (DCFEMS) experiences significant increases in EMS call volume that restrict the agency's ability to educate and train providers, perform preventive maintenance of equipment and fleet, and improve the wellness and work environment for employees. To address these challenges, the Bowser Administration has initiated EMS reform with the first phase being the selection of a third-party provider to transport Basic Life Support (BLS) patients. This will help generate more time for training as well as fleet maintenance and repair which will result in a better quality of service for residents and visitors.

### ***During what hours will the third party provider respond to calls for EMS transport?***

The third-party provider will respond to calls for Basic Life Support (BLS) EMS transports during the District's highest call volume hours, from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m., seven days a week.

### ***Who will respond to my emergency when I call 911?***

DCFEMS will continue to respond to all calls to 911 for pre-hospital medical care and transportation. This may be a fire truck or an ambulance. All responding units will be staffed by personnel who are medically trained and certified at the Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic level, depending on the call.

### ***Who will determine if I need to be taken to the hospital?***

DCFEMS members who are medically trained and certified at the Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic level will evaluate the patient to determine the level of medical care and resources required, including how the patient will be transported to the hospital. All patients have the right to request or refuse transport to the hospital after evaluation by DCFEMS personnel.

### ***When will DCFEMS take me to the hospital?***

During the District's high call volume hours (7 a.m. to 1 a.m.), DCFEMS only will take patients who are experiencing life threatening or time sensitive injuries or illnesses to the hospital for additional medical treatment. Life threatening or time sensitive injuries or illnesses include, but are not limited to, cardiac or respiratory arrest, chest pain, heart attack, stroke, major trauma, unconsciousness, any shock state or altered mental status and other serious injuries or illnesses, depending on the circumstances, including patient presentation and medical history. During the District's low call volume hours, DCFEMS will take all patients who require transport to the hospital.

### ***When will the third-party provider take me to the hospital?***

During the District's high call volume hours (7 a.m. to 1 a.m.), a private ambulance may take patients who are experiencing non-life threatening or non-time sensitive injuries or illnesses to the hospital for additional medical treatment. Non-life threatening or non-time sensitive injuries or illnesses include, but are not limited to, twisted ankle, cold or other minor virus symptoms, minor cuts or rash.

### ***How long will it take for an ambulance to arrive at my critical emergency?***

The goal of DCFEMS is for a unit to arrive at a high priority medical call within six and a half minutes, and for an ambulance to arrive within 12 minutes of being dispatched 90 percent of the time. When DCFEMS arrives

at a scene and decides that a third party will transport a patient, the third party provider will be required to respond within 10 minutes of being dispatched.

***Why must a private ambulance take me instead of DCFEMS?***

The District's call volume for emergency medical services is at an all-time high and continues to increase. A private ambulance is a supplemental resource that will transport patients in stable condition.

***How long will it take for a private ambulance to arrive?***

DCFEMS members will request a private ambulance after completing a medical evaluation and ensuring that the patient is stable. The private ambulance will be required to arrive within 10 minutes of being dispatched.

***Who will send the bill for taking me to the hospital?***

DCFEMS will send the patient an ambulance transport bill for the cost of transporting the patient. This is the current practice under DC Municipal Regulations and will not change. For additional information on ambulance billing, call 1-888-828-8019 or visit <http://fems.dc.gov/service/ambulance-billing-questions>.

***How do I file a complaint against a private ambulance provider?***

To file a complaint against a private ambulance provider, call 202-673-3331.

***Will the third party provide a lesser level of care than DCFEMS?***

No. The third-party provider will be licensed by the DC Department of Health and be required by law and regulation to provide a level of care that is the same as provided by DCFEMS. The third party will also be required to follow DCFEMS medical protocols.

***Will the third party employees be less trained than DCFEMS providers?***

No. The third party employees will be required to have the same level of medical training and certification as DCFEMS.