



Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services



OPERATIONS

EMS DUTY POLICY

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to define a member's status, minimum duty hour requirements and scheduling process.

**APPLICABILITY:** This policy shall apply to all certified career and volunteer personnel under the auspices of the Department of Emergency Medical Services.

**POLICY STATEMENT:** It shall be the policy of the Department of Emergency Medical Services to establish minimum duty requirements within a coordinated scheduling process in order to meet the demand for emergency medical services from the community.

**I. Definitions of Activity Status**

- A. Regular Volunteer Member: Volunteer member with less than five (5) years of active service with the Department of EMS.
- B. Senior Volunteer Member: Volunteer member with five (5) to twenty (20) years of active service with the Department of EMS.
- C. Tenured Volunteer Member : A volunteer member with twenty (20) or more years of active service with the Department of EMS.
- E. Associate Volunteer Member: A specifically designated volunteer member who participates as a patient care provider serving at an activity level below that of a Regular or Senior Member.
- F. College Student Volunteer: A volunteer who is qualified as an ambulance attendant-in-charge and is enrolled as a full-time student at an accredited college greater than fifty (50) miles from the City of Virginia Beach. This classification also includes qualified members enrolled full-time at Eastern Virginia Medical School or enrolled in a medical residency program.

- H. Chief Officer Volunteer: Any volunteer designated as a chief level officer by the Chief of EMS who is not functioning as an active member of an individual rescue squad.
- I. Squad Commander/Assistant Squad Commander: Any volunteer designated by the Chief of EMS as a Squad Commander or Assistant Squad Commander of an individual rescue squad.
- J. Special Operations Volunteer: A volunteer who serves as a member of one of the department's specialty teams. These member also have the associated designations of "Regular, Senior and Tenured" as defined above.
- G. Inactive Volunteer: A volunteer who is not assigned to duty activities in their assigned membership category.
- K. Career Medic: Any staff officer or patient care provider employed full-time by the City and required to hold and actively utilize medical certifications as part of their position description.
- L. Career Administrative Staff: Any member employed full-time or part-time by the City in a clerical or staff position.
- M. Virginia Beach Firefighter: Any member employed full-time as a firefighter in the City of Virginia Beach. Must be certified as an EMT or above.

## **II. Definition of Duties**

- A. Patient Care Shifts: All active patient care providers will be assigned to regular shifts in the field staffing an EMS vehicle. The EMS Chief or his designee will determine shift lengths and type of apparatus assignments as required for each level of certification. In general, volunteer patient care providers will be assigned to the ambulance as their primary duty obligation.
- B. Administrative Shifts: All active administrative members will be engaged in regular administrative or other support assignments.
- C. Specialty Shifts: Members may also staff special operations units, supervisor vehicles or event teams. In general, these shifts will be above minimum required patient care duties. Credit toward minimums may be provided on a team or event basis at the discretion of the EMS Chief or his designee.

### **III. Volunteer Member Minimum Duty Requirements**

- A. Regular Volunteer Member: Minimum of forty-eight (48) hours per month (pre-scheduled).
- B. Senior Volunteer Member: Minimum of thirty-six hours (36) per month (pre-scheduled) for members with ten (10) or more years of service. Minimum of forty-eight (48) hours per month (pre-scheduled) for those with less than ten (10) years of service.
- C. Tenured Volunteer Member: Minimum of twenty-four (24) hours per month (pre-scheduled).
- E. Associate Volunteer Member: Minimum of twenty-four hours (24) per month (pre-scheduled).
- F. Administrative Volunteer Member: Minimum of twelve (12) hours per month.
- G. College Student Volunteer Member: Minimum of forty-eight (48) hours within each semester. College members are expected to meet the requirements of a Regular Member during summer or extended breaks. Medical school students and residents are expected to provide at least one (1) scheduled twelve (12) hour ambulance duty quarterly. Additional participation is encouraged.
- H. Squad Commander/Assistant Squad Commander: During their terms of service, Squad Commanders may opt to have a duty reduction to a minimum of twenty-four hours (24) per month (pre-scheduled). Assistant Squad Commanders may opt for a reduction of twelve (12) hours, but will staff no less than twenty-four hours (24) per month.
- I. Special Operations Member – Members not acting as patient care providers are required to staff apparatus as required by their team's Squad Commander as approved by the Deputy Chief of Operations. Tactical Medics shall serve at least twelve (12) hours monthly staffing an ambulance or quick response zone car.
- J. Chief Officer Volunteer: Minimum to be designated in writing by the Chief of EMS or his designee.

### **IV. Geographic Staffing and Deployment**

Volunteers will be assigned duties via a scheduling process coordinated between individual rescue squads and the Department of EMS. Certain stations will be designated as priorities for staffing based on location and demand for service. The EMS Chief or his designee will establish staffing policies and priorities.

The Department of EMS recognizes that in order to meet the staffing priorities, members may need to be scheduled for duties outside of their station of membership.

Career staff will augment volunteer ambulance staffing, as necessary, to meet staffing goals.

## **V. Unit Staffing**

The baseline staffing level shall be at least ten (10) ambulances, three (3) quick response ALS units, at least two (2) field supervisors and one (1) Command Duty Officer around the clock. Staffed units will meet the following minimum manning requirements and be in an available status for call or relocation:

- A. Ambulance: 1 Operator, 1 Attendant-in-charge, 3rd position used for training; (optional position)
- B. Non-Transport Units:
  - a. Zone Car/Quick Response Vehicle - 1 ALS Provider (serves as operator and attendant-in charge), 2<sup>nd</sup> position used for training (optional position)
  - b. Fire Engine/Ladder/Rescue Truck – 1 Operator, 1 Attendant-in-charge, 1 or more Attendants
  - c. Special Operations Unit (MRT, SWAT, etc) – 1 Operator
- C. Supervisor: One officer qualified for the designated position in accordance with the Supervisor Policy.

## **VI. Staffing Procedures**

- A. Squad commanders shall ensure the activity status of each member is properly documented in the department's designated scheduling program and related databases.
- B. Volunteer ambulance duty assignments

1. At member level, the member shall:
  - a. Submit duty availabilities via the designated centralized online scheduling program no later than the 0000 hours on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Delayed submittals are discouraged, but may be authorized by the Squad Commander on a case-by-case basis.
  - b. Provide as many openings as possible to provide greatest flexibility for schedulers. Regular active members shall provide at least six openings unless approved temporarily for fewer inputs by their Squad Commander. More senior members may submit proportionally less availabilities based on their number of required duties.
  
2. At Squad Level, the station will:
  - a. Formulate station ambulance duty rosters and,
  - b. Submit duty rosters, personnel availability rosters, and any additional available personnel to the Department of EMS Scheduling Coordinator for review and modifications by 0000 hours on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.
  - c. All members should be utilized to the maximum extent possible. In the unusual case of a member with limited flexibility and delayed availabilities, the Squad Commander will assign them to the schedule as soon as possible. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis with oversight by the Squad Commander's chain-of-command. In these cases, members not assigned by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month will be assigned by the Department of EMS Scheduling Coordinator.
  - d. Staffing as many ambulances as possible shall be the priority of the rescue squad schedulers. No other types of apparatus assignments will be made at this level. The Department's Scheduler Coordinator will review alternative staffing requests (i.e. zone car) as part of the monthly coordinated review.

- e. Squad Commanders/Schedulers should NOT post a draft copy of the schedule prior to the Department of EMS Scheduling Officer approving and distributing the schedule.
3. At Department Level, the following will be completed:
- a. Scheduling Coordinator compares all duty rosters to determine if baseline staffing levels have been achieved;
  - b. Using inputs from the scheduling program, the Scheduling Coordinator, in coordination with squad schedulers, may modify rosters to achieve minimum staffing by relocating members and augmenting with staff or citywide volunteer personnel;
  - c. Updated schedules will be posted at each station and advertised via the centralized scheduling system no later than the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month.
  - d. Department and squad schedulers will continue to work within their membership to increase staffing levels even after the schedules are posted;
  - e. Squad Commanders and station scheduling officers will publish all updates and notify the Scheduling Coordinator of staffing changes;
  - f. Career paramedics will be assigned to augment ambulance staffing where required based on the rescue squad staffing resources;
  - g. Department staff will compare each active and inactive member to all duty rosters to ensure their status is correct and each member is maintaining individual minimum duty requirements.
  - h. Assistant Chiefs or other designated officers will regularly review compliance with availability submissions, leave or other exceptions to the scheduling processes at the squad level.

C. Volunteer Special Operations duty assignments

- a. Special Operations members will submit their duty availabilities to the appropriate team commander.
- b. Each team will develop their own duty rosters internally.
- c. Duty rosters will be provided to the department's scheduling coordinator to be included in the master staffing roster.

## **VII. Corrective Action for Missed Duty**

Missing duty shall be considered misconduct and subject to corrective action. The following shall be the minimum corrective action placed against a volunteer provider. The procedure for corrective action within one year is:

1. One (1) missed duty.
  - a. Documented oral counseling by provider's supervisor and a reassignment of the missed duty
2. Two (2) missed duties.
  - a. Written reprimand by a provider's supervisor.
  - b. Minimum of one (1) make-up duty should be considered.
3. Three (3) missed duties.
  - a. Increased levels of corrective action up to and including dismissal from the department.

## **VIII. Refusal to Stand Duty**

A member's refusal to stand an assigned duty as outlined above or the willful disregard to stand an assigned duty at a reassigned location will be considered a failure to act and dismissal from the department may occur.

## **IX. Continuum of Care**

It is not the intent of this policy to address the continuum of care or individual provider skill performance. The Department will evaluate

individual skill performance, continuum of care and/or other individual activities and adjust duty activities as needed.

**X. Exceptions**

On a case-by-case basis, the member's Squad Commander, can grant variances to minimum duty requirements outlined in this policy to any volunteer EMS provider. Variances are expected to be temporary and will be reviewed on a regular basis by officers in the member's chain of command.

Any variance in excess of ninety (90) calendar days requires approval of the EMS Chief or his designee.

This policy shall become effective upon the approval of the Emergency Medical Services Chief.

**ORDERED:**



**10/27/2019**

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EMS Chief

Date