

Responsibilities of Prehospital Care Providers and Coordination of Services

The provision of patient care is a responsibility given to certified and/or licensed individuals who have completed a medical training and evaluation program specified by the NYS Public Health or Education Laws and related regulations or policy. Prehospital providers are required to practice to the standards of the certifying agency (DOH) and the medical protocols authorized by the SEMAC and local REMAC.

Patient care takes place in many settings, some of which are hazardous or dangerous. The equipment and techniques used in these situations are the responsibility of the locally designated, specially trained and qualified personnel. Emergency incident scenes may be under the control of designated incident commanders who are not emergency care providers. These individuals are generally responsible for scene administration, safe entry to a scene or decontamination of patients or responders. When access to a patient is restricted because of safety concerns or other limitations, medical direction of patient care by certified EMS personnel is essential. This can be provided by trained responders using appropriate personal protective equipment or by communicating instructions to those responders moving or extricating the patient.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Health Law, the individual having the highest level of prehospital certification and who is responding with authority, "has a duty to act" and therefore is responsible for providing and/or directing emergency medical care and the transportation of a patient. Such care and direction shall be in accordance with all NYS standards of training, applicable State and Regional protocols and may be provided under medical control.

The Governor's Executive Order No. 26, of March 5 1996, establishes the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIMS) as the standard command and control system for emergency operations in New York State. The Incident Command System (ICS) does not define who is in charge, rather it defines an operational framework to manage many types of emergency situations. One essential component of ICS is Unified Command. Unified Command is used to manage situations involving multiple jurisdictions, multiple agencies or multiple technical needs. The principles of Unified Command apply equally to single vehicle MVC's or large-scale incidents. The specific issues of direction and provision of patient care and the associated communications among responders must be integrated into each single or unified command structure and be assigned to the appropriately trained personnel to carry out.

This policy supports ICS and provides for the best patient care within the practices of a well functioning ICS system.

Excerpts taken from NYSDOH Bureau of EMS Policy Statement No. 98-05