

**CCEMS  
OPERATIONS POLICY 100-18  
USE OF CELL PHONES**

**I. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To outline the county expectations for all aspects of cell phone use by CCEMS employees, or any individual that happens to be on one of the CCEMS units.
- 1.2 To assure that the safety of the crew, the patient, and the community is never jeopardized due to cell phone usage.
- 1.3 To outline cell phone procedures and responsibilities for both employees and administration.
- 1.4 To clarify and detail extra safety measures in conjunction with the Coshocton County Employee Manual.

**II. POLICY**

- 2.1 The Director, Assistant Director and QA/QI Coordinator are required to carry a county issued cell phone with them at all times and maintain availability to ensure CCEMS operations are maintained. In the event a member of administration will not be available by phone an e-mail containing a "on call" administrator will be sent in advance to all CCEMS personnel.
- 2.2 CCEMS Supervisors will be issued a primary phone that is to be shared by all supervisors. Only one supervisor will be on duty at a time. Crews are expected to use the primary number when contacting their supervisor for any operational questions or concerns.
- 2.3 Primary crews will have a county issued cell phone in their "first out" vehicle. All crews leaving the county must carry this phone on their person and be available to answer calls if needed. These phones are strictly for business use only, and should not be used to make any personal phone calls.
- 2.4 CCEMS Employees and auxiliary personnel are allowed to carry their personal cell phones, however:
  - 2.3.1 Cell phone covers must be plain. Covers that have designs, emblems, or logos are prohibited and must be removed or replaced with a plain cover.
  - 2.4.1 Employees and auxiliary personnel that have cell phones equipped to take pictures **are not permitted** to use the "camera feature" while on-duty with CCEMS. Employees, auxiliary, students and/or observers are prohibited from taking any pictures of accident scenes via cell phone or taking any pictures of victims or injuries.
  - 2.4.2 Misuse, negligence, malfeasance, internet posting, forwarding or sharing any CCEMS emergency scene operations where victims or victims' families can be identified will be subject to discipline up to and including employment termination. This includes sharing or forwarding pictures, video and/or text messaging.

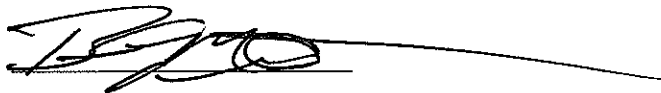
- 2.4.3 Employees are permitted to use their personal cell phone to answer a direct call or use a "direct connect" feature while at the base, in the passenger compartment, or in the patient compartment as long as no patient is on board.
- 2.4.4 Employees are not permitted to answer their cell phone when patient care is being delivered.
  - 2.4.4.1 The exception would be to use their personal cell phone to contact a supervisor, another unit for help, medical control or the Sheriff's Department.
- 2.5 The driver of the vehicle is not permitted to answer or use the cell phone while operating the vehicle. This also includes Text Messaging. The passenger of the vehicle is expected to answer all cell phone calls to ensure safe operations of the vehicle.
  - 2.5.1 In the event a crew receives a call while an employee is delivering care and the other is driving, the following steps will be taken:
    - 2.5.1.1 The driver will continue to operate the vehicle and will not answer the call.
    - 2.5.1.2 The person delivering care, if able, is permitted to answer the call on the company assigned phone. The conversation must be business related, kept very short and must never interfere with patient care. Employees are prohibited from answering personal calls while patient care is being delivered.
    - 2.5.1.3 Texting while operating a CCEMS vehicle or use of personal texting or phone use while on the scene of a call will be considered a serious offense and the employee may be subject to termination.
- 2.6 All personnel will set all cell phones on the "vibrate mode" when responding to any type of request or attending any CCEMS function. If the cell phone does not have the vibrate option, then it must be turned off until the run is completed or the event is over.
- 2.7 Employees are not permitted to allow personal calls, whether through their cell phone, or the Station phone, to interfere with their job duties.
- 2.8 CCEMS Employees and administration will also follow cell phone guidelines as outlined in the Coshocton County Employee Manual pages 84-88.
- 2.9 CCEMS employees and administration that have been issued County owned cell phones for business purposes will incur an income tax liability for any personal use of these phones under the IRS Fringe Benefit Tax Laws. Personal use will be determined by reviewing the monthly cell phone statement. The value of the personal use of a County owned cell phone will be calculated monthly. The annual total of this personal use will be reflected as additional income on the employee's individual W-2 form at year-end.
- 2.10 Personal cell phone use while on duty is considered a privilege. Any violation of this policy will result in loss of privileges and the inability to carry a cell phone while on duty along with discipline procedures up to and including employment termination.

### III. PROCEDURE

- 3.1 All CCEMS personnel, (and other individuals approved to be on CCEMS units) who have personal cell phones, are permitted to carry them while on duty.

- 3.2 Employees will carry the company cell phones anytime they leave the county. I.e.: Out-of-town transfers. This will enable the on-duty crews or supervisors to make contact with the crew if needed and avoid unnecessary charges to personal phones for CCEMS business.
- 3.3 Calls or direct connects may be answered on duty as long as it doesn't cause disruption or disrespect. (Continuing education classes, company meetings or taking blood pressures.) In these cases, employees should set their phones to the vibrate mode and allow the call to go to voice mail.
- 3.4 If the driver of the vehicle has to make an emergency phone call, then the vehicle should be pulled over and brought to a complete stop. The vehicle is expected to remain stopped until the phone call is completed.
- 3.5 There will be times when supervisors, S.O., the hospital and/or other crews need to contact the transporting crew to deliver pertinent information. This may occur while one crew member is driving and one crew member is deliver patient care. In the event this occurs, crews will follow section 2.6. Crew members will never allow cell phone calls to interfere with patient care or safe operation of the vehicle.
- 3.6 Employees are not permitted to allow phone calls, whether by cell phone or the direct base phone, to interfere with the daily chores or other responsibilities.
- 3.7 Excessive personal cell phone use while on duty may be subject to progressive discipline procedures up to and including termination.
- 3.8 The Assistant Director will monitor all county issued cell phones for personal calls. All individuals with County issued cell phones will be required to review each monthly bill and identify any personal calls or expenses.
  - 3.8.1 Any costs in excess of the standard monthly charges that result from the employee making a personal phone call will be assessed to the employee and the employee will be required to reimburse the County for those costs.
  - 3.8.2 The taxable value of any personal calls will be calculated in accordance with the guidelines contained within "The Taxable Fringe Benefits Guide" created by the Internal Revenue Service office of Federal, State and Local Governments (FSLG).
  - 3.8.3 The taxable value of the personal calls will be calculated monthly. At the end of the year, the total taxable value will be added to the employee's W-2 wages as additional income. You will not be paid this amount, or owe it back to the county, but you will be liable for any taxes on the amount.
  - 3.8.4 Per IRS rules, if you fail to review any monthly phone bill and identify your personal phone calls, the entire monthly cost is deemed taxable usage.

Director:



Effective: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: 11-5-2010