



RACINE FIRE DEPARTMENT

INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO: Racine Police & Fire Commission **DATE:** August 29, 2019
FROM: Chief Steve Hansen
SUBJECT: 2019 Fire Department Promotion

Honorable Members of the Racine Police and Fire Commission;

Communications from the Fire Chief requesting approval of the Racine Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure change to add disciplinary action for fire department officers and fill in officers for incomplete or inaccurate Emergency Medical Services, National Fire Incident (NFIRS) reports and Unit Reports.

For over 100 years the Racine Fire Department has provided Emergency Medical Services to the citizens of Racine. First with horse drawn wagons and later with motorized ambulances starting in 1929. Today the fire department provides highly skilled, and highly trained Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics operating six ambulances throughout the City of Racine. We annually respond to over 10,000 EMS calls for service.

Since the mid 1990's the fire department has billed patients for a portion of the cost associated with ambulance transport to a fixed medical facility or hospital. The idea was those who use the service should be responsible for a portion of the service costs. The community as a whole maintains the base cost of providing EMS coverage while the users of the service cover the cost of personnel, supplies and specialty equipment that is used to provide Emergency Department level care in the field and homes of our citizens.

Of critical importance to the department is highly accurate electronic patient medical reports. Not only is this important for documenting the treatment of patients it is important for cost recovery through the billing for medical services provided. Members of the department are fully expected to accurately and promptly fill out all necessary medical reports at the conclusion of the emergency run or no later than the end of their work shift.

In the last few years we have observed our electronic patient medical reports have been getting sloppy. Reports at times do not contain sufficient written information to provide complete medical documentation of the treatment a patient receives. This in turn leads to a lack of information for the purpose of billing patients for services rendered. In 2018 our billing agency, LifeQuest, issued patient bills in the amount of \$6 million dollars and change. The city and department only collected \$2.1 million due to insurance write offs and the inadequate report

writing Company Officers have done. Realizing this is a significant issue the fire department undertaken a series of trainings this year. LifeQuest has provided a minimum of six separate training seminars for all members of the department between January 1 and August 20, 2019. At the conclusion of all this training is the department's mission to increase the accuracy of all EMS reports both from a medical treatment standpoint and a revenue standpoint.

Current efforts at EMS report writing. Starting on August 26th we are evaluating whether improvements are taking place in EMS report writing through October 10th based on fire department training efforts since January 1, 2019. We will compare to past EMS reports with future EMS reports looking for improvement. If there is no improvement in the quality of EMS reports starting mid to late October we will require a second crew member to review and sign off on the accuracy of the EMS reports. We will then proceed for another 60 days of EMS report reviews. On or about mid-December we will reassess all our efforts to improve EMS report writing and finally if EMS reports fail to improve, we are recommending disciplinary action through pre-approved time off without pay starting January 1, 2020.

Recommended change to the Racine Fire Department Standard Operating Procedure regarding EMS and NFIRS Report Writing:

Effective January 1, 2020 disciplinary action for poor or incomplete EMS, NFIRS and Unit report writing will consist of the following time off without pay and based on common errors. Errors are counted during each calendar month and disciplinary action implemented shortly thereafter. Calendar months vary from 28 to 31 days.

Here is a list of the more common errors. Other reporting errors do occur and therefore this is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

- EMS report missing or not completed within the work shift
- Missing patient assessments
- Missing or incomplete patient demographics including body weight estimates
- Incomplete written patient assessment which is lacking enough detail to understand what occurred during the incident
- Incomplete or missing narrative details
- Failure to mention other responding units and their actions prior to MED unit arrival.
- Date and Time of symptom onset
- Improper formatting or missing incident number, date and time
- Improper formatting or missing complete incident address including suffix(s).
- Street suffix missing
- Report address does not match Pro-Phoenix CAD/RMS address
- Crew signature section missing
- Unit report incomplete, missing or lacking enough detail to understand what occurred during the incident
- Missing or incomplete patient signature section
- Conflicting information within the report
- Incorrect EMS template utilized
- Failure to indicate if the patient resides within the RAFD service area
- Failure to obtain receiving hospital signature or not indicating the reason for not obtaining the receiving hospital signature

- Failure to document advance directives
- Failure to document delay in responding to a scene (staging issues)

Recommended disciplinary action:

1. 1 to 5 EMS report errors in a calendar month starting January 1. Written reprimand and 3 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department.
2. 6 to 10 EMS report errors in a calendar month starting January 1. Written reprimand and 6 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department.
3. 11 or more EMS report errors in a calendar month starting January 1. Written reprimand and 12 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department.
4. Not completing EMS, NFIRS or Unit reports prior to the end of the work shift day. First offense oral reprimand, second and third offenses - 6 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department; fourth and subsequent offenses 12 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department. Offenses based on a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.
5. Not completing EMS, NFIRS or Unit report errors within 24 hours of notification on the next scheduled work day - First offense oral reprimand, second and third offense 6 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department; fourth and subsequent offenses 12 hours time off without pay at the discretion of the department.

Offenses based on a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

I respectfully submit the above SOP updates for your approval.

Respectfully,

Steve Hansen, Fire Chief