

**WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY FOR EMS AGENCIES

Please find below the policy governing the use and restocking of controlled substance drugs by EMS personnel in West Virginia. The policy has been clarified with both the DEA in Washington and the Executive Director of the Board of Pharmacy of West Virginia.

1. By law, EMS agencies must have a controlled substance permit issued by the appropriate state agency. Since the Office of EMS now licenses EMS agencies, the controlled substance permits can be issued by the West Virginia Office of EMS instead of the Board of Pharmacy. I have discussed this with the Executive Director of the Board of Pharmacy and we both agree to this procedure. The Office of EMS will issue this permit free of charge to the EMS Agency.

2. There are two main methods by which EMS squads can obtain and restock their controlled substances:
 - A. The physician medical director, under his DEA number, would have an arrangement with a pharmacy or hospital to provide the EMS Agency with the controlled substance. It is recommended that the physician order the substance on DEA Form 222. The physician **CANNOT** write a regular prescription for the substance made out to the squad. Prescriptions can only be written to the ultimate end user (i.e. the patient). The medical director takes full responsibility for the substance based on his/her DEA number.

 - B. An EMS squad can obtain their controlled substances directly through their local hospital pharmacy. This requires a formal **WRITTEN** agreement between the squad and the hospital and should be negotiated along with the physician medical director.

Both of the above options must also include a very specific recording mechanism which must include recording of ID numbers, patient names, paramedic name, date, etc. as required by the controlled substance guidelines.

Special Notes: Although medical directors may apply for a separate DEA number for the EMS Agency, it is not necessary or even desirable according to the DEA.

Additional Issue: The question has been posed regarding paramedics carrying of controlled substances in their drug boxes. During specific discussions with the DEA in Washington, it was emphasized that West Virginia is a rural state and that many paramedics are on call and respond from home to many situations where they may arrive and provide care prior to the actual ambulance arriving. During these situations, paramedics may need to carry limited amounts of controlled substances in their drug boxes at home or in their private vehicles. This practice is acceptable to the DEA as long as it is part of the Standard Operating Procedures of the West Virginia Office of EMS. The following written guidelines must be in effect in order for this practice to be part of the WVOEMS Standard Operating Procedures.

1. This practice can only be carried out with the specific written permission of the squad and regional medical director. The medical director assumes responsibility for the paramedic carrying the substance. A written justification describing the necessity of this practice must be included and signed by the medical director. It should include what effect not being able to carry out this practice might have on patient care in their area.
2. Written guidelines to assure that the box is double locked as required in controlled substances guidelines.
3. Written guidelines to assure that the box containing the substances is not left unattended for extended periods of time, which might allow it to be stolen or tampered with.
4. Specific sign-out procedures and log records of the substances, which allow it to be easily tracked, if so requested.
5. Written guidelines, which allow only a relatively small unit dose amount of each substance to be carried.
6. This practice is under the supervision and control of the squad medical director and his/her DEA number. If there is a problem, then that medical director is responsible.