




EMS Information Bulletin 2021-12

DATE: August 2, 2021

SUBJECT: Additional Exception Under Act 17 of 2020

TO: PA EMS Agencies
PA Regional EMS Councils

FROM: Dylan Ferguson, Director
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PA Department of Health
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dylan J. Ferguson', is positioned above the typed name and title.

[Act 17 of 2020](#) amended the EMS System Act to permit the Department of Health (Department) to grant exceptions to the ambulance staffing standard for Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances. Pursuant to the Act, exceptions were only to be granted in cases where there were extraordinary reasons and in the best interest of the EMS system and patient care.

On July 6, 2020 the Bureau of EMS (Bureau) issued [EMSIB 2020-27 Act 17 of 2020 BLS Ambulance Staffing Exceptions](#). This document established the general criteria and process for staffing waiver applications.

Despite the termination of the declaration of disaster emergency, the Department finds the continued effects of COVID-19 on the overall EMS system to constitute an extraordinary circumstance. As a result, and in the best interest of the EMS system the Department is issuing the following staffing exception in accordance with its authority outlined in Act 17 of 2020.

Exception 1:

At the time of patient transport, a BLS ambulance must be operated by a certified Emergency Medical Services Vehicle Operator (EMSVO), and the patient must be attended by an EMS provider at or above the level of an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

This exception is effective as of 00:01 on October 1, 2021 for all EMS agencies licensed by the Department and will remain in effect until 00:01 on July 01, 2022.

Violation of any of the conditions of the exception by an EMS agency shall constitute a violation of the granted exception and the Department may take action including, but not limited to, revocation of the exception for that EMS agency.

Please note, this exception only applies to ambulances operating at the BLS level. EMS vehicles operating above the BLS level must comply with the staffing standards set forth in the applicable sections of the EMS Act and corresponding rules and regulations.