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Standard Practice for Training Instructor Qualification and Certification Eligibility of Emergency Medical Dispatchers¹

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INTRODUCTION

The emergency medical dispatcher (EMD) is the principal link between the public requesting emergency medical assistance and the emergency medical services (EMS) system. The EMD plays a key role in the ability of the EMS system to respond to a perceived medical emergency. The benefits of specifically trained emergency medical dispatchers are far reaching. Through medical dispatch, specific education, and compliance to medically sound policies and procedures, the EMD is able to accurately interrogate the caller, dispatch the appropriate responders, provide pertinent information to responders, and give instructions to aid patients via the caller.

This practice provides direction for the training and certification of emergency medical dispatchers to assist them in making appropriate decisions about EMS responses in a safe, consistent and non-arbitrary manner. EMS systems with emergency medical dispatchers trained to this practice provide pre-arrival instructions to the caller to assist the patient until pre-hospital care arrives. The EMD concept provides for safer vehicle response configurations and modes. It may reduce operating costs by preserving specialized EMS resources for those emergencies requiring them.

The EMD training curriculum is not intended to furnish all inclusive telecommunications education required for the emergency medical dispatcher or public safety telecommunicator. EMD training provides only the additional education affecting the practice of dispatching emergency medical resources such as ambulances, rescue units, first responder units and other types of responding units of an emergency medical nature; coordinating these response units with those of other public safety agencies; and providing instructions to the calling party to assist in preserving life prior to the arrival of responding units. The curriculum is intended to provide specific knowledge and medical information above that required of a previously trained and educated basic public safety telecommunicator. EMD training is only one module of education required of emergency medical services telecommunicators. It is a subspecialty of both public safety communications and emergency medical services systems that is required within a comprehensive public safety communications center where other disciplines of communications are practiced and should be present in all EMS systems. Additional disciplines include law enforcement, fire, and aeromedical telecommunications.

This practice is one of a set of applicable standards relating to the emergency medical dispatch function. The reader is directed to obtain related ASTM documents that encompass the administration of EMD programs and Practice F 1258.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the training structure and primary function of emergency medical dispatchers. The primary function of the emergency medical dispatcher is the management of calls for emergency medical assistance as outlined in Practice F 1258 and NAEMSP Position Paper on emergency medical dispatch. Training as an emergency medical technician, para-

medic, nurse, physician, or basic telecommunicator does not prepare a person to function as an EMD. The emergency medical dispatching functions have become so specialized that only an individual with dispatch specific medical training can perform the required tasks. This practice will delineate the training structure for the essential role of emergency medical dispatcher.

1.2 This practice is intended to outline the basic areas of knowledge required for an EMD, and to standardize the expectations and training between the various educational settings that are available to deliver the EMD training. This

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