

Catawba County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating Guidelines

Vehicle Accidents

This policy is an interdepartmental adjunct to Chapter 275 of the Catawba County Personnel Code: "Operations Standards for Drivers of Vehicles Used for County Business". It is intended as a guideline for managing the moments immediately following an accident while driving an EMS vehicle. It shall be the responsibility of the driver or crew to comply with this policy. EMS personnel are also bound by the content of Chapter 275.

- I. Vehicle accidents while **en route** to emergency scene or to a medical facility while driving **emergency traffic**
 - A. If there **are** injuries (to EMS personnel or occupants of other vehicles), the driver or crew shall triage and treat victims. Another EMS vehicle should be requested to respond to the original incident.
 - B. The driver or crew shall report to the Communications Center the following information:
 1. Location of accident scene.
 2. Number of injured persons, type and severity of injuries.
 3. Brief description of condition of EMS vehicle.
 4. Request to notify appropriate supervisor.
 - C. The unit involved in the accident will **not** leave the scene if there are any personal injuries.
 - D. If there are **no** injuries and damage to the EMS vehicle is minor, the unit **may** leave the scene, if the above steps (A) (excluding injuries) and (B) have been completed, and the driver or crew complies with the following:
 1. No unit may leave the scene without permission from an informed Supervisor.
 2. A **known** emergency must exist.
 3. A. If responding to a call emergency traffic: There is no possibility of another EMS unit advantageously positioned to respond to the original call.

B. If transporting to a facility emergency traffic: The delay of another unit's response to continue the transport could bring about further detriment to the patient.
 4. If another occupied vehicle is involved, the EMS driver shall give his/her name, address, driver's license number, the license plate number of vehicle involved, and County insurance information to the person struck or the driver or occupant of any vehicle collided with. (This is dependent on such person or persons being physically and mentally capable of receiving such information). County insurance information is located on laminated cards provided by Risk Management. These may be found attached to this booklet.
 5. If only damage to property occurs, the driver shall give his/her name, address, driver's license number, the license plate number of the vehicle involved and the County insurance information to any person whose property is damaged in the accident. If the damaged property is a parked and unattended vehicle and the name or location of the owner is not known or readily ascertainable by the EMS driver, the driver shall furnish the information required by this subsection within **48 hours** to the nearest available peace

officer or shall immediately place a paper-writing containing that information in a conspicuous place on the damaged vehicle. If the damaged property is a guard rail, utility pole, or other fixed object owned by the Department of Transportation, a public utility, or other public service corporation to which report cannot readily be made at the scene, it shall be sufficient if the responsible driver furnishes the information required to the nearest peace officer or make written report thereof containing the required information by U. S. certified mail, return receipt requested, to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles within **5 days** following the collision.

- E. If the unit leaves the scene of the accident and continues to respond to the initial emergency call, an additional unit will be dispatched to the location of the initial emergency call for patient transport, and the unit involved in the accident will return to the accident scene as soon as possible.
- II. Occurrence of vehicle accidents while **not** en route emergency traffic:
- A. Follow steps as outlined in I (A) and I (B).
 - B. Assist in directing traffic until the proper law enforcement agency arrives.
 - C. The unit involved in the accident will not leave the scene until authorized by law enforcement.
- III. When damage renders a unit disabled:
- A. Turn off ignition and battery switches.
 - B. Remove fire extinguisher and portable medical equipment if there is danger of fire, without endangering personnel.
- IV. Relaying information at the accident scene:
- A. Catawba County EMS personnel **will not** discuss details of accidents with anyone except EMS administration or law enforcement officials.
- V. Filing of accident reports:
- A. The driver (if uninjured) will be responsible for acquiring police accident reports and forwarding these reports to the appropriate supervisor within **24 hours**. (If the driver sustained injury not allowing such action, EMS administration will acquire such information).
 - B. An EMS incident report shall be completed on all accidents by personnel involved and forwarded to the appropriate supervisor within **24 hours**.
 - C. The driver will coordinate with the supervisor and garage manager to obtain at least **two** estimates for repair within five working days.
- VI. Filing of Catawba County **Injury/Exposure Report**.
- A. The supervisor of an injured EMS employee is responsible for the completion of and Injury/Exposure Report. This report must be completed and copies forwarded to appropriate departments.
- VII. Reporting of EMS vehicle accidents to appropriate personnel.
- A. Immediately notify proper law enforcement officials.

- B. Immediately notify the Department Head through the chain of command.
- C. Immediately notify the Garage Manager.
- D. Notify the Risk Manager within one working day of the accident.

VIII. Accident Review.

- A. Accident review will be completed by the Risk Manager, according to Chapter 275 of the Catawba County Code.