



HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMS Program

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What is EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ?

The EMS Program regulates private ambulances that operate within the City of Houston with the goal of improving patient care outcome by ensuring the safety, reliability, and readiness of emergency medical services. The program and its investigators focuses on the thorough examination of ambulances to verify they meet specific safety standards and properly equipped with the necessary medical supplies based on the essential equipment list from Chapter 4, TDSHS, and each provider Medical Director protocols.



EMS in Houston

Houston Fire Department

- Only service that provides emergency services in Houston
- Does not provide transfer services



Private Ambulance Services

- Are not permitted to provide emergency medical service
 - Unless an emergency occurs during transport
- Provide transfer services to and from hospitals, dialysis clinics, rehab facilities, nursing homes, etc.



What does the EMS Program do?

The EMS Program regulates private ambulance services and drivers to ensure compliance

- Permitting the ambulance companies to provide transfer services
- Permitting the ambulance drivers to drive a vehicle equipped with lights and sirens
- Mandatory comprehensive annual inspections
- Random spot inspections in the field



Section 4 6: Required equipment

- Deletes the reference to the American College of Surgeons Essential Equipment
- Will follow State Equipment list, private medical director protocol list, and HHD approved list – reviewed and updated annually by EMS physician MD, HFD, and HHD EMS Program
- Specialized units are allowed modification if not used for routine operations



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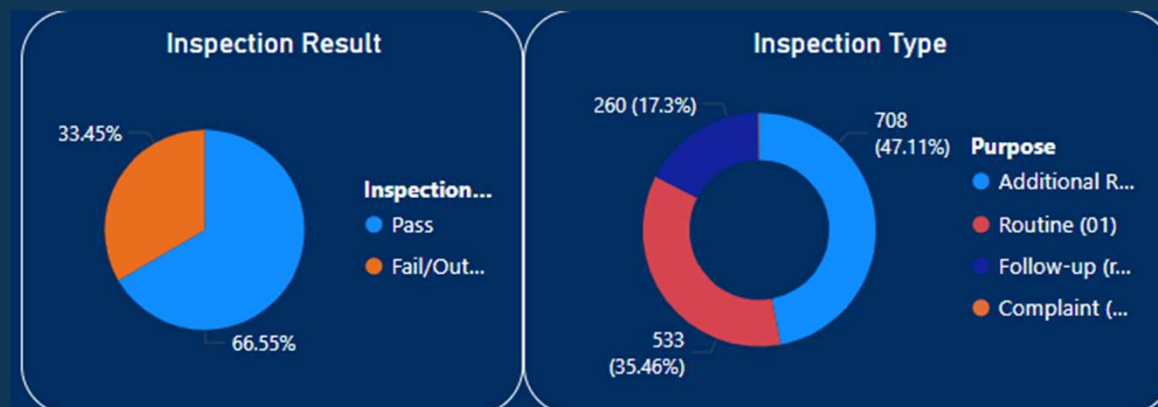
Per HFD - list of essential equipment that allows the operation of City of Houston vs National

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Section 4-7: Vehicle Inspections

Ambulance are to be inspected before being placed in service and thereafter annually, as well as on a spot inspection basis

- Permit holder shall pay a reinspection fee
- Permit shall not be renewed or issued until permit holder has paid any outstanding reinspection fees
 - Resource allocation and cost recovery because conducting reinspection requires additional staff time, travel, and administrative resources. A reinspection fee ensures that the costs of repeated inspections are not unfairly borne by the department but are instead covered by the operators requiring additional inspections
 - Incentivizes compliance by encouraging EMS providers to address deficiencies promptly and ensure their vehicles meet compliance standards on the first inspection, reducing the need for multiple visits
 - Divert staff time and resources away from first-time inspections and other critical regulatory duties. A fee discourages unnecessary reinspection and allows the department to allocate resources more efficiently



Section 4-9: Persons authorized to engage in emergency ambulance service.

- Authorizing mobile stroke units and other operators to provide emergency services pursuant to an agreement with the City
 - Provide pre-hospital treatment of thrombolysis in acute ischemic stroke patients
- Section 4-1 Definitions – Adds Mobile Stroke Units (MSU)

Section 4-3:

City emergency ambulance driver's permit

All ambulance driver's that drive a private ambulance upon the streets of the City must have a City of Houston Ambulance Driver Permit

- Class C Texas driver 's license or the equivalent issued by another state
 - Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who are temporarily working in Texas can comply with the driver permit requirements while fulfilling their duties

832-393-5740		Property of the Houston Health Department	
	CITY OF HOUSTON HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT EMS PROGRAM	KEEP THIS ID & EMT CARD WITH YOU OR AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES WHILE ON DUTY	
	CERTIFIES THAT John Doe Meets the requirements for an Ambulance Driver Permit Prescribed in Section 4.3, of the Houston City Code of Ordinances	IDENTIFICATION	
Account #: 1921	Expires: 02/27/2027	Name: John Doe	
		Address: 901 BAGBY HOUSTON, TX 77002	
		DOB: 01/01/1980	TDL: 23456789
		TDSHS EMT#: 771234 B	
Property of the Houston Health Department		832-393-5740	

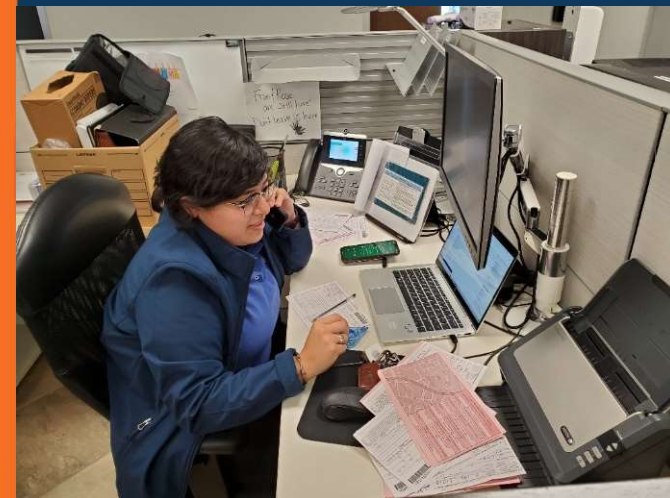
Section 4-4, 4-5, 4-9, 4-10, 4-15, 4-20

- Sec 4-4 – Deletes requirement and process of a certificate of proficiency
- Sec 4-5 – Comply with Chap 773 of the State of Texas, Safety Code, and stricter HHD and HFD equipment standards
- Sec 4-9 – Addition of stroke units as emergency units
- Sec 4-10 – Deletes a reference to an outdated statute
- Sec 4-15 – Adjust insurance coverage requirements to meet current state regulations
- Sec 4-20 – Authorized the director to promulgate rules for administering the ordinance provisions

Links and References

- [Chapter 4 - AMBULANCES | Code of Ordinances | Houston, TX | Municode Library](#)
- https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH4_AM
- [EMS Permits | Houston Health Department](#)
- <https://www.houstonhealth.org/services/permits/ems-permits>
- [Certification/Licensure Information - Texas Department of State Health Services, EMS & Trauma Systems](#)
- [Disciplinary Actions - Texas Department of State Health Services, EMS & Trauma Systems](#)
- [Online Services \(state.tx.us\)](#)

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QUESTIONS