

## Ambulance Billing Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) Whom can I call to discuss my ambulance bill?

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **prior to May 25, 2013**, please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov).

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **on or after to May 25, 2013**, please call our new billing vendor, **Digitech**, at:

Phone: 877-659-0481 (English)

Phone: 877-659-0482 (Spanish)

Fax: 914-741-1325

Email: [HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM](mailto:HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM)

### 2) Can I request a bill reduction?

Unfortunately, because the City of Houston is a government entity, we do not have the flexibility to reduce the amount you owe. The City's charges for EMS services are established by City Ordinance, passed by a majority vote of City Council. Further, the State of Texas Constitution, Article 3, Section 55 would prohibit the city from reducing your debt amount.

State of Texas Constitution: Article 3, Legislative Department, Section 55 – RELEASE OR EXTINGUISHMENT OF INDEBTEDNESS TO STATE, COUNTY, SUBDIVISION, OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. The Legislature shall have no power to release or extinguish, or to authorize the releasing or extinguishing, in whole or in part, the indebtedness, liability or obligation of any corporation or individual, to this State or to any county or defined subdivision thereof, or other municipal corporation therein, except delinquent taxes which have been due for a period of at least ten years.

(Amended Nov. 8, 1932.)

### 3) Why am I receiving a bill if I did not call for an ambulance?

You will be billed if you were provided a service with a fee associated. You have the right to refuse treatment and transport.

### 4) I received a bill for an ambulance transport, but I never used an ambulance. Can you update your records so I am no longer being billed?

We are sorry for the inconvenience. We would be happy to update the account so it does not reflect incorrect information. Please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov). We will have an EMS representative reach out to you within 2 business days.

### 5) How can I pay my ambulance bill?

Payment can be made by check or money order. At this time we do not offer credit card payment by phone or payments online.

If you would like to mail in your payment, please include your account number and make checks payable to "City of Houston". Send payments to:

**City of Houston EMS**

**P.O. Box 4945**

**Houston, Texas 77210-4945**

**6) Do you offer payment plans?**

We offer you the option of paying your ambulance bill over a period of time. Please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov), and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you within 2 business days to discuss payment options.

**7) If my insurance paid, why am I still receiving a bill?**

The City of Houston does not have in-network contracts with private health insurance companies; therefore, we do not waive any unpaid portion of the bill.

**8) Does the City have a Charity Care Program to assist with paying for my ambulance bill?**

The City of Houston does have a Charity Care Assistance Program. Please click on Charity Care Assistance Application on the below link for further information:

[https://www.houstontx.gov/finance/acct\\_receivable.html](https://www.houstontx.gov/finance/acct_receivable.html)

**9) Why is my ambulance bill so high?**

It is very costly for the City to respond to and transport patients in emergency situations. The rates are set by City Council and actually only represent a portion of the full cost of a response and transport.

**10) Where can I find fees for ambulance service?**

Fees can be found here: [http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN\\_FeeSchedule/](http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN_FeeSchedule/)

**11) I believe that my bill is wrong, it lists items that were not used (oxygen, medication, etc.), can you correct my bill?**

We would be happy to discuss the charges on your bill. Please contact our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov), and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you with 2 business days.

**12) What happens if my check is not paid by my bank?**

If your check bounces or for any reason is not honored by your bank, you will be charged by the payment processor. The fee is in addition to the amount you owe for the ambulance transport. The account will be subject to collection activity.

**13) I dispute the bill. Can I appeal this with the City?**

If you have questions regarding the amount on your bill, you may discuss it with the City. Please contact our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov), and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you with 2 business days.

#### **14) How can an Attorney or Records company request a medical record and/or billing record?**

Please use the following contact information for medical records requests:

**City of Houston HFD**

**500 Jefferson Street, Suite 1970**

**Houston, TX 77002**

**Phone: 832-394-6860 Fax: 832-394-6882**

Please see the EMS billing records request information sheet after the frequently asked questions on how to request billing records. Note: All billing record requests must include a current patient medical authorization made out to City of Houston and payment must be included with the request. Fees for records can be found here:

[http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN\\_FeeSchedule/](http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN_FeeSchedule/). Failure to comply will result in a delay of your request.

#### **15) How do I obtain a billing record?**

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**HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM**

#### **16) Why do you take two days to respond to many requests?**

The City took the proactive measure of terminating our contract with our previous billing vendor, in part because of the customer service issues they caused. While we understand the frustration at our turnaround of some requests, we believe we are providing better handling of these bills, and we are striving to get better every day.

# CITY OF HOUSTON

## EMS Billing Records Request Information

*(THIS PROCESS DOES NOT APPLY FOR PATIENTS REQUESTING THEIR OWN RECORDS)*

To request records for ambulance transports that occurred **on or after May 25, 2013**, please contact the City of Houston's new EMS billing vendor, **Digitech**, at:

Phone (English): **877-659-0481**  
Phone (Spanish): **877-659-0482**  
Fax: **914-741-1325**  
Email: **HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM**

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To request records for ambulance transports that occurred **before May 25, 2013**, please follow the instructions below:

Please use the link to check the fee: [http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN\\_FeeSchedule/default.aspx](http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN_FeeSchedule/default.aspx)

- **Billing records:** fee charge per patient/date of service (see copies of patient medical records under Fire Department)
- Other billing record documents requiring witness and notarization signatures:
  - **Preparation of an affidavit:** fee charge per document/per patient/date of service (see preparation of an affidavit under Fire Department)
  - **Responses to depositions on Written Questions:** fee charge per document/per patient/date of service (see subpoena request fees under Finance Department)

All requests must include **Patient Medical Authorization**. Make checks payable to **City of Houston**.

**All requests will be fulfilled within 30 days of receipt and released via mail only. Failure to comply with the requirements above will result in the return of your request.**

Please return your request along with the **above noted payment**. Please mail your billing records request to:

**City of Houston EMS**  
**PO Box 3347**  
**Houston, TX 77002**

For questions, call **713.837.0311** or email [ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov](mailto:ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov).

**Please Note:** We do not prepare Medical Records at this location. Please use the following contact information for medical records requests:

City of Houston Fire  
500 Jefferson Street, Suite 1970  
Houston, TX 77002  
Phone: 832-394-6860  
Fax: 832-394-6882