

Washington State Department of Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System
Verification Process and Response Area Assignments

Verification Application and Evaluation Process

Purpose

“It is in the best interest of the citizens of Washington State to establish an efficient and well-coordinated statewide emergency medical services and trauma care system to reduce costs and incidence of inappropriate and inadequate trauma care and emergency medical service.” See RCW 70.168.010

This verification application and evaluation process for basic life support (BLS), intermediate life support (ILS), and advanced (paramedic-level) life support (ALS) aid and ambulance services is published by the Washington State Department of Health (Department), as required by WAC 246-976-390, in order to ensure an efficient and well-coordinated statewide trauma care system is maintained.

The Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System (Office) within the Department will administer the BLS/ILS/ALS verification application and evaluation process.

This information provides guidance to prehospital agencies regarding the verification application and evaluation processes under WAC 246-976-390 so they may be verified and respond to trauma calls originating in a specified response area. See Appendix ‘B’: Definitions of Terms and Additional Requirements and chapters 70.168 RCW and 246-976 WAC for the definitions of terms used throughout this document and for additional application and service requirements.

Applications must include all documentation required for licensure under WAC 246-976-260 or the application will be considered incomplete. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Office if questions arise and for clarification of the instructions. Incomplete applications will be returned without action to applicant.

New applicants must complete the entire application and verification process. Services that are presently verified may be eligible to file an amended application. Contact the Office to determine whether the change being considered qualifies. The Office may require submission of supporting documentation to decide eligibility for filing an amended application.

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Completing the Application

- 1) Applications and general instructions are available upon request by contacting the Office at (800) 458-5281, ext. 1 or by downloading from the website www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/emstrauma.
 - a. **Check with the Regional EMS Council to determine whether or not the approved plan shows the need for an additional service.**
NOTE: Maps of Response Areas are available in the respective Regional EMS and Trauma Care Offices and plans are posted on the Office website (www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/emstrauma). The minimum and maximum number of verified services by type and the distribution by response areas are specified in the approved regional EMS plans.
- 2) Complete the application including the following (attach additional pages as necessary):
 - a. Dispatch Plan
 - b. Response Plan (include station locations and system status management if used)
 - c. Level of Service
 - d. Type of Transport (if seeking verification as a transport agency)
 - e. Tiered Response and Rendezvous Plan
 - f. Back-up Plan to Respond
 - g. Interagency Relations
 - h. A detailed explanation of how the applicant's proposal avoids unnecessary duplication of resources/services as outlined in the Approved Regional Plan "Needs and Distribution of Services" provisions
 - i. A detailed explanation of how the applicant agency will meet the specific needs as outlined in the Approved Regional Plan.
- 3) Include evidence of current liability insurance coverage: Include a copy of the liability insurance coverage policy, an ACCORD certificate of insurance, *or* a letter from a licensed insurer verifying the required insurance will be in place for the applicant agency at the time verification goes into effect.
- 4) Provide a detailed narrative on each of the following:
 - a. Consistency with the Approved Regional Plan and Patient Care Procedures
 - b. Vehicles and Equipment
 - c. Sufficient Staffing Levels
 - d. Trauma Training Program
 - 1) How the service's present Certified EMS Personnel have been, or will be, trained so they have the necessary understanding of Department-approved Medical Program Director (MPD) protocols;
 - 2) How the service will assure that its personnel understand their obligation to comply with the MPD protocols;
 - 3) How the service will assure that its personnel will maintain currency with the protocols whenever they are revised; and

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- 4) How the service will address numbers 1-3 for new personnel as they join the organization
 - e. Participation and compliance with Regional Quality Improvement.
- 5) The applicant must affirm that:
- 1) All information it has submitted to the Office is true and correct;
 - 2) It agrees to participate in the Department-approved Regional Quality Improvement Program Policy; and that
 - 3) Its Certified EMS Personnel will complete an MPD-approved trauma training program before responding to any trauma incidents.

Submitting the Application

- 1) Send the original copy of the application to:

Department of Health
Office of EMS and Trauma System
Licensing and Certification Section
PO Box 47853
Olympia, Washington, 98504-7853

- 2) Send a copy of the complete application to the Regional EMS Council in whose area the service is applying for response area assignment. (Plans for applying electronically are underway but this is not an option at this time.)

Evaluation Process

- 1) The Licensing and Certification (L&C) Section of the Office will review the application to determine whether the application is complete. If it is not complete, L&C Section will contact the applicant agency with specific instructions for providing complete information. An application cannot be evaluated until it is complete. In most cases, the application will be returned to the applicant to be completed.
- 2) Within 45 days, the Regional EMS Council will review and comment as to whether the application is consistent with the Approved Regional Plan.
- 3) Following response from Regional EMS Council as to consistency with the Approved Regional Plan, the Licensing and Certification (L&C) Section of the Office will review the application. At a minimum, consistency will be evaluated based upon (a) whether the maximum number of verified services already exists in the region, (b) whether the applicant proposes to respond to an underserved and available area, (c) if the service's description of its compliance with regional MPD protocols and regional quality assurance plan is adequate and, in the case of a service being purchased or absorbed into another, (d) whether the replacement service will meet the response times required in the WAC and maintain the level of service provided by the service being replaced.

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- 4) The Regional EMS Council will provide detailed information to support its assessment if it deems the application to be inconsistent with the Regional EMS Plan.
- 5) The Regional EMS Council will send its signed review and comments to the Office. Immediately following the 45-day Regional EMS Council review and comment period, or upon receipt of the Regional EMS Council's review and comment, the Office will proceed with the evaluation process.
- 6) The L&C Section and the Education, Training and Regional Support (ETRS) Section of the Office will concurrently review the application(s) to determine consistency and compliance with the Approved Regional Plan as well as the State Plan, and the ETRS Section will report its findings to the L&C Section.
- 7) The Office will score complete applications as described in Appendix A. The Office will select the agency that receives the highest total points. No application will be approved if it is not consistent with the Regional EMS Plan regardless of points awarded.
- 8) A pre-verification site visit will occur in all instances involving ALS and ILS ambulance applications and when multiple applicants are vying for BLS transport verification. Provisional verification may be granted, e.g., to allow an agency to purchase proposed equipment, implement coverage plans. The Office may withdraw provisional verification status if provisions of the agency's proposal are not implemented within the provisional period or otherwise as provided in chapters 70.168 RCW and 246-976 WAC.
- 9) The Office (L&C Section) will provide written notification to the applicant of the final decision in the verification award and copy the Regional EMS Council and the MPD of the name of the successful applicant, location and level of service.
- 10) Verification and licensure will run concurrently and will expire, unless renewed, on the date of expiration but no less than 24 months from the date licensure/verification is granted under WACs 246-976-260 and 246-976-390.

Posting of Response Area Availability

- 1) The Department of Health will post response area availability. This may be done through posting of regional EMS plans or through mailings to services.
- 2) When an application for verification includes the intent to serve a response area that is not identified in a Regional EMS Plan as underserved and available, the Office will notify services in the region of the opportunity to apply. Applications will be accepted for 30 days from the date the Department's notices are sent to services in the region.
- 3) The Department may grant a provisional license to the applicant for 120 days if it deems it in the public interest to do so during the posting and evaluation period.
- 4) Posting of a response area will be required under the following circumstances:

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- a. Enactment of new law that impacts response area assignments;
 - b. When a verified service relinquishes its assignment for that response area (requires written notification to the Office);
 - c. When a verified service is removed from the assigned response area as a result of the Uniform Disciplinary Act or its license is revoked; or
 - d. When a whole new response area is created that is not identified and published in the Regional EMS Plan.
- 5) Posting of response area generally will not be required if:
- a) The change is not substantive, e.g., solely a change of name which does not change the response area served;
 - b) The area is the incremental expansion of the designated city limits or fire district served;
 - c) The area has been identified in the Regional EMS Plan as underserved and that plan is posted on the Office's website;
 - d) The change is the result of a merger or absorption of one service by another which does not change the aggregate of the response areas served;
 - e) A licensed and verified service is purchased or absorbed by a licensed but non-verified service with no change in response area resulting. The purchasing service must file an amended license application and application for verification 90 days prior to operations commencing (this may be accomplished using one application). A 120-day provisional verification and response area assignment will be given, during which time, the Regional EMS Council and the Office will review the application.
 - f) A non-licensed, non-verified entity purchases a service which is verified for a specific response area and no change in response area results. The new service must apply for a license and verification at least 90 days prior to the date of operations commencing.

NOTE: A new legal entity requires a complete application and process for a new license/verification.

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APPENDIX ‘A’
VERIFICATION APPLICATION SCORING

The Office will evaluate all complete applications, employing a scoring system that applies points to specific key categories of the verification application. Applicant agency(ies) may propose service, equipment, etc. that exceed minimum requirements as set forth in WAC 246-976-390 and the Approved Regional Plan, and the Office will assign points up to the maximum specified below for each category. The Office will select the agency that receives the highest total points, up to a maximum of 200 points.

Response Plan - 50 Points Maximum

This section assesses the applicant agency’s ability to provide services as a verified agency. Agency(ies) may receive from 0 to 50 points depending upon the agency’s plan for:

- Response Time Compliance. Proposed response time compliance meets or exceeds minimum requirements as outlined in WAC 246-976-390(11) and the Approved Regional Plan for each geographic category (urban, suburban, rural and wilderness). Applications that exceed such minimum requirements will receive more points. Applications that exceed such minimum requirements in areas of higher demand (e.g., urban and suburban) may receive more points. Agencies are encouraged to focus on all areas to achieve equitable distribution of resources.
- Dispatch Plan
- Tiered Response and Rendezvous Plan

Clinical & Equipment Capabilities - 40 Points Maximum

This section evaluates an agency’s ability to provide quality equipment operated by clinically proficient responders. Agencies are encouraged to provide detailed information on training and education practices, recognized trauma training programs, expanded CME opportunities, etc. Agencies should also detail the make, model, manufacture date and condition of equipment that will be utilized in providing service as a verified agency.

Staffing - 30 Points Maximum

In addition to listing the personnel on the appropriate pages of the application, agencies are encouraged to provide narrative detailing the number and certification levels of Certified EMS Personnel. Within this section, the agency will describe its plan for providing service 24-hours per day, 7-days per week. Agencies should clearly identify the number of response vehicles and the manner with which the vehicles will be staffed and deployed.

Regional EMS - 40 Points Maximum

The applicant agency should detail their understanding of the Approved Regional Plan focusing on how their proposal addresses weaknesses as identified in the Approved Regional Plan, and how Regional Patient Care Procedures will be incorporated into their operation.

Interagency Relations - 40 Points Maximum

The applicant agency will detail how they will interface with other agencies to provide service to the Response Area for which verification is being sought. Particular emphasis should be placed on collaboration with other providers, back-up plans and mutual aid agreements that illustrate a systematic approach to providing trauma care to the community. Emphasis and a detailed narrative should be provided on how the proposal avoids unnecessary duplication of services/resources.

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APPENDIX 'B'

**VERIFICATION APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

The definitions set forth in chapter 70.168 RCW and chapter 246-976 WAC, as well as the following definitions and additional application and service requirements, shall apply:

- 1) **Back-Up Plan to Respond.** In the event the applicant agency is unable to respond immediately to a trauma incident, the applicant agency plan should outline any provisions for back-up vehicles/agencies.
- 2) **Consistency with Approved Regional Plan and Patient Care Procedures.** The application should clearly illustrate the applicant agency's knowledge and understanding of the Approved Regional Plan's provisions and Patient Care Procedures.
- 3) **Dispatch Plan.** How service requests are received (e.g., 9-1-1, E 9-1-1, seven digit telephone number, etc.). Additionally, how applicant agency vehicles are dispatched to a trauma call and any technological enhancements that may be utilized to facilitate the dispatch and communications process.
- 4) **Interagency Relations.** For a Trauma Care System with multiple providers, collaboration and cooperation are essential to achieve optimum efficiency. A listing of mutual aid agreements, memoranda of understanding, etc., and a description of agreed upon services, are evidence of the presence of such collaboration and cooperation.
- 5) **Level of Service.** The level of verification (i.e., BLS, ILS or ALS), specified in the Approved Regional Plan, being sought.
- 6) **Minimum Requirements.** The applicant agency(ies) application for verification must meet all minimum requirements for the level of service as set forth in WAC 246-976-390 and the Regional Plan, 24-hours per day, 7-days per week, 365-days per year.
- 7) **Response Area.** The service coverage zone identified in the Approved Regional Plan.
- 8) **Response Plan.** The location and manner with which the applicant agency(ies) emergency response vehicles will be deployed within the defined Response Area. The plan should clearly illustrate the agency's ability to meet response time criteria as outlined in the WAC 246-976-390 and the Regional Plan.
- 9) **Certified EMS Personnel.** Certification of the applicant agency(ies) staff is consistent with the level of service.
- 10) **Sufficient Staffing Levels.** Applicant agency(ies) will provide a detailed explanation of the number of vehicles and hours per day, per vehicle, that will be deployed within the Response Area.
- 11) **Tiered Response and Rendezvous Plan.** If the applicant agency(ies) plan incorporates a tiered response system and/or a plan to rendezvous with other EMS provider agencies, the applicant agency(ies) will provide a detailed explanation of the proposed response system and identify those agencies with whom the agreement will apply.
- 12) **Type of Transport.** The applicant agency(ies) should clearly define whether or not their services include interfacility transport services in conjunction with 9-1-1 responses.
- 13) **Underserved Area.** A response area that has no verified service assigned or one that has unmet needs identified by the Department.
- 14) **Vehicles and Equipment.** The applicant agency(ies) should provide a detailed list of the vehicles and equipment that will be used to provide service under the proposed plan so that the minimum requirements are met. Vehicle type and age should be provided in conjunction with a statement affirming that all equipment meets the minimum requirements.
- 15) **Approved Regional Plan.** The Regional Emergency Medical Services and Trauma Care Plan, required by RCW 70.168.100, approved by the Department.
- 16) **Regional Quality Improvement Program.** The applicant agency agrees to participate in the Regional Quality Improvement Program as defined in WAC 246-976-390(4)(D).

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Amending an EMS Agency Verification

Amending an EMS agency's verification may, under some circumstances, meet the need for a service's verification information to be current with the Department of Health. For verified services, this amendment process will also fulfill the need to update and amend the license on file with the Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System (Office).

1. Changes requiring an amendment to a service's verification include the following examples:
 - a. Changes in level of service (e.g., BLS to ALS).
 - b. Change in type of service provided. (e.g., ALS Aid to ALS Ambulance)
 - c. Change in the county or EMS region.
 - d. Adding or deleting station locations.
 - e. Change of emergency response areas.
 - f. Reduction of 10% or more in available unit hours within the affected response area.
 - g. Change of the name of the applicant or the name under which it conducts business as an ambulance service.
 - h. Change of the administrative headquarters location.

NOTE: A new legal entity requires a complete application and process for a new license/verification.

2. To make changes to a service's application on file at the Office:
 - a. Use the same form as used for a new license but complete only those parts of the application necessary to identify the service, and those needing to be updated for changes. This form is found on the website www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/emstrauma.
 - b. Indicate that the application type is "Amendment" by checking the appropriate box and fill in the information as noted in a. above.
 - c. Proceed through the application recording new information in the sections where changes have been made.
 - d. Submit the application to the Office and a copy to the Regional EMS Council for the region in which the service is assigned its response area. (The Regional EMS Council will review the amended application when changes listed in #1, a. through f. are involved, comment on consistency with the Regional EMS Plan and then forward the application to the Office with supporting documentation if it deems the amendment not to be in compliance with the Regional EMS Plan.)

The Office will review the amended application and evaluate it as indicated in the evaluation section of the "Verification and Response Area Assignment Process." Incomplete applications will be returned with specific instructions for providing complete information. Make the changes or corrections and resubmit the form as indicated in step d. above. The Office may schedule an on-site visit and inspection and review the results prior to making a final determination on the amended application.

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Amending an EMS Agency License*

Amending an EMS license rather than submitting a completely new application may fulfill the requirement for a service's license to be current with the Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System (Office).

1. Changes requiring an amendment to a service's license include the following examples:
 - a. Change in type of service (e.g., from aid to ambulance).
 - b. Change of the applicant's name or the name under which it conducts business as an ambulance service.
 - c. Change of the administrative headquarters location.
 - d. Change in the county or EMS region.
 - e. Adding or deleting station locations.
 - f. Change of emergency response areas.
 - g. Reduction of 10% or more in available unit hours within the affected response area.

***NOTE:** A new legal entity requires a complete application and process for a new license.*

2. To make changes to a service's application on file at the Office:
 - a. Use the same form as used for a new license but complete only those parts of the application necessary to identify the service, and those needing to be updated for changes. This form is found on the website www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/emstrauma.
 - b. Indicate that the application type is "Amendment" by checking the appropriate box on the application and fill in the information as noted in a. above.
 - c. Proceed through the application recording new information in the sections where changes have been made.
 - d. Submit the application to the Office and a copy to the Regional EMS Council for the region in which the service is assigned its response area.

The Office will review the amended application. Incomplete applications will be returned with specific instructions for providing complete information. The applicant will make the changes or corrections and resubmit the form as indicated in step d. above. The Office may schedule an on-site visit and inspection and review the results prior to making a final determination on the amended application.

*** A verified service may use the "Amending an EMS Agency Verification" to update its verification.**