

Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Service Charges

Date of Approval by Council: 01/13/87

Resolution No: 40-87

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: 60-66-003

Last Review Date: 05/26/2006

Next Review Date: 05/2009

Administrative Responsibility: Emergency Services

Policy Statement

Strathcona County Emergency Services provides pre-hospital emergency medical service on a fee-for-service basis. The intent of this policy is to clearly define and formalize the fee structure for various levels of pre-hospital emergency medical services as well as outline the process for handling complaints from users of the service relative to fees charged to specific calls.

General

1. Strathcona County Emergency Services fees for pre-hospital emergency medical service shall be based on the rates established by the Emergency Services Bylaw.
 - a) Advanced Life Support (ALS)
 - b) Basic Life Support (BLS)
 - c) Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
2. No patient will be charged for more than one level of service on any one call.

Definitions

1. Advanced Life Support (ALS)--an ambulance equipped for Advanced LifeSupport assessment and treatment, carrying three trained personnel, including a minimum of one Firefighter/Paramedic.
2. Basic Life Support (BLS)--an ambulance equipped for Basic Life Support Assessment and treatment, carrying three trained personnel, including a minimum of one Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).
3. Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) – an Emergency Services unit equipped to provide EMR level of service, carrying a minimum of one EMR.
4. Mileage Charge--the rate per kilometre charged for the Emergency Services vehicle from the time it leaves the station until it returns to the station.

Specific Charges

1. The following fees shall be charged to each patient requiring treatment and/or transport by the Strathcona County Fire Department.
 - a) Emergency Ambulance Response and transfer of patient to a hospital--ALS plus mileage.
 - b) Pre-scheduled nonemergency transport of a patient from one location to a second location--BLS plus mileage.
 - c) Emergency Ambulance Response and transport by helicopter ambulance--ALS plus mileage. (Note: Alberta Government pays actual helicopter fees.)
 - d) Emergency Ambulance Response and transport of more than one patient in one ambulance--ALS per patient transported plus mileage divided by the number of patients transported in the ambulance.
 - e) More than one ambulance responds to provide emergency treatment and transportation--ALS per patient plus mileage for each ambulance transporting patients.
 - f) Ambulance standby fees for special functions or awaiting patients for nonemergency transport--BLS plus standby rate.
 - g) Emergency ambulance response and transport patient to local clinic or location other than hospital emergency ward. The normal policy shall be that the Fire Department Ambulances do not transport patients to locations other than hospital emergency wards; however, a Paramedic may transport the patient to another location if the following conditions are met :
 - h) The patient demands to be transported to an alternative location and accepts full responsibility.
 - i) The person is not deemed to be seriously ill or injured in the opinion of the Paramedic and does not require an emergency room assessment.
 - j) The doctor will receive the patient at his/her office (confirmation is required from the doctor prior to transport).
 - k) The principal of a school, parent or legal guardian for children under the legal age requests the transport to the alternate location and accepts full responsibility for the patient.
 - l) The patient (or parent/principal in charge of a minor) is informed there will be a fee charged and are informed that Blue Cross or similar insurance policies will not cover the fee charged.
 - m) Fees charged shall be--ALS plus mileage.
 - n) Emergency Ambulance Response and no transport--ALS. If the patient(s) is assessed and no treatment is given, no charge shall be assessed to the patient. If the patient is provided with treatment, the fee charged shall be --ALS rate per patient.

Collection of Fees

1. All bills shall be processed through Financial Services as per Financial Services policies.

2. When any person(s) has a concern or complaint relative to any statement of account or bill charged to them for emergency medical or ambulance service, the following shall apply:
 - a) Step 1 Verbal and written concerns or complaints shall be referred to the Paramedic Coordinator who shall discuss the fees charged and the statement with the aggrieved party or their representative.
 - b) Step 2 If aggrieved party is not satisfied a written complaint outlining their grievance shall be submitted to the Fire Chief who may:
 - i) uphold the original statement of fees.
 - ii) modify the fees charged based on level of treatment rendered.
 - iii) forgive the bill.
 - c) Step 3 If the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision of the Fire Chief, he/she may appeal the decision to the County Treasurer who shall undertake any further investigation required and if applicable negotiate a settlement.
 - d) Step 4 If the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision of the County Treasurer, he/she shall have the right to appeal the decision to the County Council.

Review

The County Treasurer may recommend to the Associate Commissioner any changes in policy and procedure or disciplinary action where appropriate, to ensure future claims are minimized.