

Section I

General Standards

I(A) General Standards

1. Buncombe EMS employees will not report to duty while under the influence of any controlled substance, illegal drug, or alcohol. Use of such substances on duty is prohibited.
 - a. An on-duty employee suspected to be under the influence while on duty may be asked by EMS management to submit to a blood alcohol or drug screen test.
 - b. An employee who refuses to take such a test or tests positive for a controlled substance shall be suspended from duty pending an investigation.
 - c. The EMS Supervisor may refer the employee to the Buncombe County Employee Assistance Program for counseling.
2. EMS personnel must be in good health to care for others.
 - a. An employee that appears to be unable to care for others because of physical or mental problems will be asked to have an examination by a physician at the employee's expense.
 - b. The physician must certify in writing that the employee is capable to continue duty.
 - c. The employee shall be suspended from duty pending the outcome of the examination.
3. An EMS employee convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude will be suspended pending disciplinary action.
 - a. An employee charged with a felony or crime involving moral turpitude shall be suspended from duty pending investigation and/or court decision.
4. EMS employees must maintain a good driving record on and off duty to meet county insurance regulations. EMS employees are required to drive county owned vehicles and must be "insurable" as defined by the vehicle insurance carrier.

- a. Personnel must comply with all license restrictions while on duty. Example: If an employee is required to wear corrective lenses while driving, that employee must have their prescribed corrective lenses with them at all times.
 - b. All EMS personnel must be able to operate an ambulance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Personnel with license restrictions prohibiting them from driving at certain times or days will be suspended pending further action.
5. Any employee considered “uninsurable” may be suspended without pay or terminated.
 6. “Uninsurable” is defined by the County’s insurance carrier, but may include the following convictions in the past 5 years:
 - 1) More than two Class B violation convictions
 - 2) More than two chargeable accidents
 - 3) Any combination of more than two of the above
 - 4) Any Class A violation

CLASS A VIOLATIONS

- 1) Driving while intoxicated.
- 2) Driving under the influence of drugs.
- 3) Negligent homicide by motor vehicle.
- 4) Operating during a period of suspension or revocation.
- 5) Use of a motor vehicle in the commission of a felony.
- 6) Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.
- 7) Operating a motor vehicle without owner’s authority.
- 8) Permitting an unlicensed person to drive.
- 9) Reckless Driving.
- 10) Hit and Run.

CLASS B VIOLATIONS

All moving violations not listed as Class A violations.

7. EMS personnel shall maintain good personal hygiene at all times.
 - a. An employee with personal hygiene that is offensive to patients or fellow employees will be relieved of duty by EMS Management.
 - b. The employee may return for the next duty shift if the problem has been corrected, but will not be paid for the time absent.

- c. Future hygiene problems by the employee will result in disciplinary action.
8. Buncombe EMS employees are expected to work together to facilitate good patient care, response readiness, and overall continuity of operation.
 9. Pranks that would affect patient care, response time, the integrity of a fellow employee or patient, or that would result in monetary loss to a fellow employee or Buncombe County are prohibited.
 10. All administrative and operation questions are to be handled through the chain of command.
 - a. Complaints concerning employees, other county departments, other agencies, or allied facilities are to be put in writing and given to the EMS supervisor.
 - b. Buncombe EMS personnel shall not discuss complaints until they have properly notified EMS administration of the matter and have been informed of a decision or action to be taken.
 - c. Employees, who are not satisfied with a decision and/or action, should consider an appeal as outlined in the Buncombe County Personnel Manual.
 11. Buncombe EMS employees are encouraged to offer suggestions for improvement of their organization.
 12. Buncombe EMS employees will provide EMS management with their telephone number, mailing and home address, and emergency contact information.
 - a. Employees are responsible for notifying the operations office of any changes in this information.
 - b. Numbers and addresses will not be released to anyone by the EMS supervisor.
 13. Policy changes and clarifications are made via memoranda and email. All personnel are responsible for reading and understanding the contents of these memoranda and email. The EMS supervisor has copies of all memoranda for personnel review.

I(B) EMPLOYMENT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. Requirements for employment with Buncombe County Emergency Medical Service follow. An employee must:
 - a. Be at least 21 years of age.
 - b. Have the ability to interact courteously and professionally with co-workers, allied health professionals, and the public.
 - c. Have a current North Carolina Driver's License, with a minimum of two years driving experience.
 - d. Be credentialed as a North Carolina Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate or Paramedic.
 - e. Not be addicted to the use of drugs or alcohol. Candidates must submit to a blood/urine test as outlined in the Buncombe County Personnel Policy.
 - f. Not have been convicted of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude. Background investigations are done on each applicant being considered for employment. Convicted felons need not apply.
 - g. Successfully complete the Buncombe County Assessment Center Evaluation which includes:
 1. Written examination
 2. Practical patient care scenario
 3. Driving evaluation
 4. Lift test involving the movement of an ambulance cot with 200 pounds along a test course with a previously successful candidate
 - h. Possess knowledge of (or be actively engaged in learning) Buncombe County roads, streets, and geography.
 - i. Be within limits of current NCOEMS guidelines for continuing education and credential regulations.
2. Candidates for employment with Buncombe County EMS should submit an application through the Buncombe County Personnel Department.

I(C) CREDENTIALING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

1. Buncombe County EMS will in no way be responsible for the EMT-Intermediate, EMT-Paramedic, or any other NCOEMS credential of an employee or current EMS personnel. This is the sole responsibility of the employee.
 - a. EMS personnel are required to submit two (2) copies of each new or re-credential to the Training Officer.
2. All employees are responsible for obtaining continuing education as required by NCOEMS and local medical control.
3. Clinical experience at Mission Hospitals or Park Ridge Hospital is to be arranged with the system Nurse Liaison. Personnel are responsible for documentation of clinical hours on the required form.
4. Required skills evaluations will be held frequently and composed of performance standards as outlined by current NCOEMS and local medical protocol. EMT-Paramedics and Intermediates will be evaluated in other areas and may have written exams. All personnel are required to pass such evaluations to maintain employment. Additional chances to pass examinations will be offered.
5. All continuing education credits must be approved by the Training Officer.
6. Employees who wish time off with pay for conference attendance must follow the procedure outlined in the Buncombe County Personnel Manual. Forms are provided in the Operations Office.
7. Employees will not be excused from duty to attend school, seminars, or training classes unless conference leave has been approved. Units will not be put out of service or leave their district to attend classes etc., except as allowed by EMS management.
8. Many resources for continuing education are available to EMS Personnel such as: periodicals, literature, and audio-visuals, AB Tech EMS, MAHEC Library, the video library at EOC, and many of the county fire departments.

9. Buncombe EMS encourages participation in a wide variety of continuing education opportunities. At the discretion of the director, EMS employees may be reimbursed and/or given conference leave for attending seminars that have been approved by the Training Officer. Items eligible for reimbursement include registration fees, travel expenses, and lodging. All requests for reimbursement must be submitted in writing at least 3 weeks prior to the seminar for approval. Any employee who receives reimbursement for attendance must complete the appropriate reports for the county Finance Department and supply them with all receipts and any other required documents within 5 days after returning.
 - a. Personnel who are unable to attend a County paid class must find a suitable substitute, or pay the County back for the class.

10. EMS personnel who demonstrate weakness in patient care techniques may be required by the Medical Director or Training Officer to gain clinical experience in one of the sponsor hospitals or some other remedial education. The type of education will be decided by the Medical Director or Training Officer and will be uncompensated.

I(D) EMS DRESS CODE

1. EMS personnel are to be neat, well groomed, and in the approved uniform at all times.
2. Field personnel will wear navy blue shirts and pants.
3. Assistant Supervisors will wear medium blue shirts and navy blue pants.
4. Operation Supervisors, Training Officer, and Field Evaluator will wear white shirts and navy blue pants.
 - a. The Training Officer and the Field Evaluator may wear non-uniform clothing as needed.
5. The Buncombe County EMS emblem should be worn on the left sleeve one inch below the shoulder seam.
6. The emblem indicating level of NCOEMS credential should be worn on the right sleeve one inch below the shoulder seam.
 - a. National Registry or CCEMT-P certification patch may be worn in place of the NCOEMS credential patch.
7. Coats must be navy blue or black with patches worn appropriately.
8. A name tag must be worn at all times, and centered over the right pocket.
9. EMS personnel will wear black belts, black or navy socks, and black shoes with their issued uniforms.
 - a. Safety shoes are a required part of the EMS uniform.
10. Scissors holsters and knife cases are to be black in color.
11. Black shoes may be omitted for more appropriate footwear when snow and ice conditions prevail.
12. Shoes, name tag, belt, and belt buckles are to be clean and polished at all times.

13. T-shirts which are visible are to be white, gray, navy blue, or black.
14. Long underwear or sweatshirts worn under short sleeve shirts are to be navy blue or black.
15. Hair length will not exceed that which would hinder any emergency operation or procedure.
 - a. Hair that is longer than shoulder length must be pulled back and secured at all times while out of the station.
16. Mustaches are to be kept neatly groomed and must not interfere with the proper fit of safety equipment common to EMS.
 - a. Facial hair is not permitted in the seal area of the HEPA half-face respirator mask.
 - b. The seal area of the HEPA mask must be clean shaven at all times. This may require personnel to shave one or more times during the duty shift.
17. Hats and toboggans provided by personnel are allowed but must be entirely navy blue or black and not have any patches other than the Buncombe EMS patch, or authorized EMS logo. The EMS Supervisor must approve all non-EMS issued hats.
18. Fire turn out gear is not to be worn by any EMS Personnel.
19. Prior approval is to be obtained from the Director of Emergency Services for any badges, patches, or uniform apparel not provided by the County or as described in this section.
20. ACLS, BTLs, PALS, Stroke pin, and other approved insignia earned by an employee may be worn over the left shirt pocket.
21. EMS uniforms are not to be worn off duty unless attending EMS functions, special duty assignments, traveling to and from work, or when required for continuing education.
22. All EMS personnel are required to maintain an extra change of uniform at the station of the unit they are working.
23. Uniforms will not be ordered for personnel unless approved by an Operations Supervisor or the Training Officer.

24. Dress for clinical time at medical facilities will be in the approved Buncombe EMS uniform.
25. Personnel will be in uniform and ready to work at the beginning of their shift.
26. Personnel will not change to street clothes until their relief has arrived and is prepared to respond.

I(E) FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

1. No patient or EMS employee shall possess any type of firearm or weapon on an EMS unit. Firearms and weapons are also prohibited at Buncombe EMS bases by EMS employees or their guests.
 - a. Folding knives, with a blade length less than 6 inches, are permitted to be carried by EMS personnel. No fixed bladed knives of any length are permitted.
2. Firearms may be possessed by on duty law enforcement or department of corrections personnel who are functioning in an official capacity.
3. Patients requiring transport who are in possession of a firearm or weapon are to have the firearm or weapon safely secured before transporting the patient.
 - a. If the patient is a civilian, have a responsible adult secure the patients firearm or weapon on the scene. If a responsible adult is not available, have EOC contact local law enforcement to respond to the scene to secure the firearm or weapon.
 - b. If the patient is a law enforcement officer, have an on duty law enforcement officer on scene secure to patient's firearm and/or duty belt.
 - c. Never leave an unsecured firearm or weapon on a scene. Have law enforcement respond and have first responders remain on scene until the firearm or weapon are properly secured.
 - d. If in doubt about how to secure a firearm or weapon, have EOC contact local law enforcement and/or the on duty EMS supervisor.

I(F) EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

1. All entering employees will be oriented to Buncombe County EMS standards. The EMS Training Officer will coordinate new employee orientation for each employee on a case-by-case basis, which may vary based upon the needs of the department at any given time.
2. During this orientation period, the probationary employee will be responsible for completion of the "Orientation Checklist" which includes the following:
 - a. Procure, read, and become totally familiar with the Buncombe EMS Operations Manual.
 - b. Procure, read, and become totally familiar with the Medical Treatment Protocols.
 - c. Read and be familiar with the Buncombe County Personnel Manual.
 - d. Become familiar with the geography and street locations within Buncombe County.
 - e. Become familiar with equipment locations on all EMS units.
 - f. Complete procedures as prescribed by the Buncombe County Personnel Office.
3. The orientation period may be extended at the discretion of the EMS staff.
4. The probationary employee must satisfactorily complete the designated orientation period prior to being assigned to a regular shift.
5. Probationary employees will be required to attend the first available defensive driving course after employment begins.
6. The employee must attend a Blood borne/Haz-Mat class with the Buncombe County Safety Officer.

I(G) TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT

1. To receive pay for accrued vacation time, a two week written notice must be turned in to the EMS supervisor and the Director of Emergency Services.
2. Vacation time off during this two week period will be given at the discretion of the department administration.
3. To have your final check released to you, you must turn in or pay for all equipment assigned to you during your employment.
4. Equipment should be returned according to the following guidelines:
 - a. A list will be provided, upon request, of all equipment to be returned.
 - b. All equipment should be returned to the Director or EMS supervisor's office.
 - c. Clothing should be cleaned before being returned.
 - d. All useable shirts, pants, coats, and jackets should be hung on separate hangers.
 - e. Shoes are to be retained by the employee.
 - f. Any item with the Buncombe County EMS name, logo, or patch must be returned. Emblazoned items which are not useable must be destroyed to prevent unauthorized use.