



REGION 11 CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM POLICY	Title: EMS Provider Impairment and Substance Abuse
	Section: EMS Personnel
	Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium
	Effective: December 6, 2023

EMS PROVIDER IMPAIRMENT AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

I. PURPOSE

To ensure patient and coworker safety through the rapid identification of prehospital personnel who are impaired or displaying signs and symptoms of a substance abuse disorder and removing them from the patient care environment.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Impairment: A condition where any of the body's sensory, cognitive, or motor functions or capabilities are altered, diminished, or affected due to the use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- B. Substance Abuse Disorder: A pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood altering purposes. This can include the use of alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, illegal drugs, and controlled substances.

III. POLICY

- A. Region 11 Chicago EMS recognizes that substance abuse as a health-related disorder. However, EMS system providers and patients may suffer adverse effects in the presence of providers whose work performance is below acceptable standards due to alcohol or drug use or impairment. Therefore, any EMS provider found to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol shall be deemed unfit to work and relieved of duty until the situation is investigated.
- B. This policy does not prohibit EMS providers from possessing, using or being under the influence of medication that a physician had prescribed for them as long as the medications are used for prescribed purpose, in prescribed dosages, and do not compromise the EMS provider's professional duty and patient care.
- C. The use, sale, or distribution of drugs and alcohol while representing the Region 11 Chicago EMS System, or reporting to work under the influence drugs and/or alcohol is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension under the EMS System Participation Suspension Policy.
- D. The use, sale, purchase, transfer, theft, or possession of an illegal drug is a violation of the federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, illegal drug and prescription medications or controlled substances not being used for the prescribed purpose, by the correct person, or using the correct dose.
- E. Anyone in violation of illegal drug activities while on or off duty will be referred to law enforcement, the EMS System Medical Director, and IDPH by the employer agency.



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F. Impaired EMS Providers

1. All employers and EMS agencies with EMS personnel in the Region 11 EMS System must have a policy to address EMS personnel who are suspected to be impaired while on duty.
2. Whenever an EMS provider is suspected to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the provider shall be relieved from duty and the incident should be immediately reported to the EMS System Medical Director, as well as the provider's supervisor. Findings will be forwarded to IDPH by the Resource Hospital. Concerns of this nature are confidential.
3. Prior to returning to duty, any individual removed from duty by his/her employer for documented reasons of impairment, must have documentation forwarded to the EMS System Medical Director that he/she is medically and psychologically capable of resuming EMS System participation.

G. EMS Provider Substance Abuse

1. All employers and EMS agencies with EMS personnel in the Region 11 EMS System must have a policy addressing substance abuse by EMS System personnel while on duty.
2. If EMS providers with suspected substance abuse disorder do not attempt to correct problems related to their drug and/or alcohol use, they will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension in accordance with the EMS System Suspension Policy. Findings will be forwarded to IDPH by the Resource Hospital.