

Chapter 6.16 AMBULANCES

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6.16.010 Definitions.

- A.
"Ambulance" means any private vehicle that is especially designed, constructed, equipped, maintained or used for the transportation of patients which is operated as part of an ambulance service for hire.
- B.
"Ambulance service" means any business involving ownership, operation, management or maintenance of any ambulance within Thurston County.
- C.
"Medic one personnel" means any person who is acting on behalf of a fire department of fire district and who has been certified as a paramedic, emergency medical technician, first responder, or advanced first aider.
- D.
"Medical Transport Officer" means emergency response person who is responsible for patient transports.
- E.

"Operations Committee" means the operations committee of the Emergency Medical Services System Council.

F.

"Patient" means an individual who is sick, injured, wounded or otherwise incapacitated or helpless.

G.

"Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company, group of individuals acting together for a common purpose, or organization of any kind, including any governmental agency other than the United States.

(Ord. 10091 § 1, 1992; Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.020 License required.

A.

Except as provided in subsection C of this section no person shall operate an ambulance or ambulance service within unincorporated Thurston County, unless licensed to do so by Thurston County.

B.

No such license shall be issued unless:

1.

The application has fulfilled all applicable requirements of the laws of the state of Washington, including but not limited to Chapters 18.73 and 70.168 RCW and Chapter 246-976 WAC, as those chapters currently exist or are hereafter amended;

2.

The applicant has met all the requirements of this chapter, including standards and regulations recommended by the EMS Council and approved by the board of commissioners pursuant to this chapter.

C.

A license is not required for ambulances entering Thurston County solely for the purpose of transporting patients from Thurston County to a medical facility outside of Thurston County, or for ambulance service rendered during a disaster when determined by the Medical Transport Officer to be necessary to a specific incident.

D.

Each license shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance.

E.

This chapter shall not be construed to preclude any city's requirement for a business license.

(Ord. 11941 § 1, 1999; Ord. 10091 § 2, 1992; Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.030 License application and reapplication.

All applications to operate an ambulance or ambulance service shall be submitted with a twenty dollar application fee to the Medic One office, 2703 Pacific Avenue SE, Suite C, Olympia, Washington, on forms provided by the Medic One office. If all requirements of this chapter and all standards and regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter have been met, the license application shall be approved by the board of county commissioners upon recommendation of the operations committee and the auditor shall issue the license. The application shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- A. Name, home address and telephone number of the applicant;
- B. Business name under which the ambulance service will be operated within the county, together with business address and telephone number;
- C. If the ambulance service is a corporation, the name and address of the officers and directors of such corporation, and in case of a partnership, the name and address of each general or limited partner;
- D. A description of each ambulance, including the make, model, year of manufacture, VIN number, together with current state license number; and the color scheme, insignia, name, monogram or other distinguishing characteristics to be used to designate applicant's ambulance;
- E. The locations from which the ambulance service is intended to operate and the number of licensed medical attendants to be initially employed;
- F. List of current employees and evidence of emergency medical technician certification, for such employees, including the certification expiration date. The list shall be updated in writing quarterly and filed with the operations committee;
- G. Any changes in the information provided on the current application shall be submitted in writing to the Medic One office within ten working days of the changes;
- H. Application for renewal of licenses must be submitted with a fee of twenty dollars by January 31st of each year;
- I.

The operations committee shall have sixty days from the date of receipt to reject renewal applicants. Those applications not rejected within the sixty-day period shall be automatically renewed.

(Ord. 11941 § 2, 1999: Ord. 10091 § 3, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.040 Insurance.

A.

No ambulance service shall be issued a license until the operator has submitted to the operations committee a certificate of insurance for automobile liability insurance in a minimum amount of one million dollars and professional insurance in a minimum amount of one million dollars issued by an insurance company approved by the county. The insurer shall be a company licensed to do business in the state.

B.

Said insurance certificate shall be submitted to the operations committee approval prior to the issuance of each ambulance license. Satisfactory evidence that such insurance is at all times in full force and effect shall be furnished to the operations committee, in such form as may be specified, by all licensees required to provide such insurance under the terms of this chapter.

C.

Every insurance policy required under this section shall contain a provision for continuing liability thereunder to the full amount thereof, notwithstanding any recovery thereon, that the liability of the insurer shall not be affected by the insolvency or the bankruptcy of the insured, and that, until the policy is revoked, the insurance company will not be relieved from liability on account of nonpayment of premium, failure to renew license at the end of the year, or any other act or omission of the name insured.

D.

Every insurance policy required under this section shall extend for the period to be covered by the license applied for, and the insurer shall be obliged to give not less than thirty days' written notice to the operations committee and to the insured before any cancellation or termination of the policy earlier than its expiration date, and the cancellation or other termination of any such policy shall automatically revoke and terminate any license issued for the ambulances covered by such policy, unless a substitute insurance policy complying with the provisions of this section shall be provided and be in effect at or prior to the time of such cancellation or termination.

(Ord. 10091 § 4, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.050 Filing of ambulance rates required.

A.

Each ambulance service licensed under this chapter shall, upon filing an application for licensure, file with the Medic One office its schedule of rates to be charged for its services, for the duration of the calendar year in which the license is to be issued. Thereafter, each ambulance service licensed under this chapter shall annually file with the Medic One office its schedule of rates to be charged for its services. Said annual rates schedule shall be filed on or before the first day of December of the year preceding the year for which the schedule is to be in effect. The schedules of rates shall be a matter of public record and open to public inspection in the Medic One office during normal business hours. Any revision during the calendar year shall be filed with the Medic One office at least thirty days prior to the rate change becoming effective. Any revisions filed with the Medic One office shall be open to public inspection.

B.

It is unlawful for any ambulance service, including any of its agents or employees, to charge, demand, collect or receive any greater rate of fare than those posted with the county Medic One office. It is unlawful for any ambulance service to charge for any service, equipment or supplies not provided by the ambulance service to the patient.

C.

It is unlawful for any ambulance service to transport a patient without advising the patient or person authorizing the transport, in advance of the transport, that they will be billed for transport services according to the rate schedule. A patient may be transported without said advisement only in circumstances when the delay in obtaining the authorization would be detrimental to the emergency care of the patient.

(Ord. 11941 § 3, 1999: Ord. 10091 § 5, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.055 Ambulance color scheme restrictions.

A.

The color scheme used by ambulance vehicles must be a color or color combination different than the color schemes reserved for Thurston County Medic One vehicles. The color schemes reserved for the exclusive use by Thurston County Medic One vehicles shall be: red vehicle and/or patient compartment with white or any color stripes(s) and/or white or any color lettering/graphics. No lettering with the words Medic One, medic, Thurston County or fire department are allowed. No Medic One unique markings or logos are allowed.

B.

No change in ambulance color scheme or company identifying features will be allowed for the duration of the license. A change in the color scheme or company identifying features will require relicensure.

(Ord. 11941 § 4, 1999)

6.16.060 License revocation.

A.

The Board of Thurston County commissioners may suspend or revoke any license issued under this chapter for failure of the licensee to comply with, or for the violation of, any provision, standard or requirement of this chapter or for any regulations promulgated hereunder. Prior to any such suspension or revocation, the board shall notify the licensee, in writing, of the intended action and of the opportunity to request a hearing concerning the proposed action within ten working days from the date of the notice. If a hearing is requested in writing by the licensee within said period, the proposed action shall not be taken, if at all, until after completion of the hearing.

B.

Any ambulance service may appeal to the board of county commissioners for review of the findings. Such appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the board of county commissioners within ten days of the license suspension or revocation shall be stayed until such time as the board has reviewed the findings and entered its decision. The stay shall not affect subsequent suspensions or revocations for subsequent violations.

(Ord. 10091 § 6, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.070 Recordkeeping.

Each licensee shall maintain complete and accurate records, which shall include information regarding requests for services and transportation of each patient within the county by the licensee. All such records shall be available for inspection at the Medic One office at all reasonable times.

(Ord. 10091 § 7, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.080 Availability of equipment and personnel.

Each licensee under this chapter shall maintain a minimum of two ambulances, at least one of which is staffed on a twenty-four hour basis.

(Ord. 10091 § 8, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.085 Ambulance personnel uniforms and identification.

It is unlawful for ambulance personnel to wear public agency uniforms while on duty for private ambulance companies. It is unlawful for private ambulance personnel to wear uniforms lettered with the words Medic One, medic, Thurston County or fire department. Personnel will identify themselves to the patient or person authorizing transport as personnel of the ambulance company they represent.

(Ord. 11941 § 5, 1999)

6.16.090 Inspections.

A.

An authorized representative of the county may conduct an inspection of a licensee upon the receipt of any complaint about said licensee. In addition to the inspections identified above, an authorized representative of the county may, during normal business hours, inspect the records, equipment and accessories of any licensee hereunder.

B.

Each licensee shall pay an inspection fee in the amount specified annually by the board of county commissioners for each inspection prompted by a complaint; provided, however, that no such inspection fee shall be paid if the board of county commissioners determines that the complaint was unwarranted or without substantial merit. All inspection fees shall be due and payable within ten days of the date of the inspection.

(Ord. 10091 § 9, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.100 Medic I—Ambulance dispatch.

A.

In order to provide optimum patient care in Thurston County and release Medic I aid cars to respond to other emergency calls, when needed, the ambulance service whose base station or branch office is located nearest the incident may be called by Thurston County central dispatch as determined by Medic I personnel at the scene. If central dispatch is unable to contact an ambulance service or an ambulance service cannot respond immediately, then the next nearest ambulance service may be contacted. This referral service does not preclude a patient from requesting that a specific ambulance service be dispatched.

B.

This referral service does not prevent a fire district or city from contracting with a private ambulance service from transportation exclusively in their jurisdiction.

C.

No effort shall be made by the licensee to assume the custody of a patient before release of custody has been made by Medic I personnel in charge at the scene.

(Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.110 Operations committee.

A.

The operations committee shall act as an advisory committee to the Thurston County emergency medical services council and board of county commissioners regarding the administration of this chapter.

B.

The operations committee shall meet at least semiannually to review and recommend amendments to this chapter to the board of county commissioners. The operations committee will meet with all Thurston County licensed ambulance companies regarding any proposed amendments. The committee may recommend new or different equipment to be required of ambulance services.

(Ord. 10091 § 10, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.120 Violation—Penalty.

A.

It is unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to operate or attempt to operate an ambulance or ambulance service without first complying with the provisions of this chapter, including all standards and regulations adopted by Thurston County pursuant to this chapter. Any person, firm or corporation convicted of violating any provisions of this chapter, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined in an amount not exceeding five hundred dollars. Each day during which any person, firm or corporation is in violation of the provisions of this chapter shall constitute a separate violation.

B.

According to established administrative procedures, the operations committee, who has solicited a quorum vote, may issue a cease and desist order prohibiting an ambulance service from operation within Thurston County, or such other order as deemed appropriate, determined by the circumstances of the violation(s).

(Ord. 10091 § 11, 1992: Ord. 7928 § 1 (part), 1984)

6.16.130 Variances.

A.

The operations committee shall have the authority to grant variances from the provisions of these rules and regulations, when in the opinion of the operations committee, the criteria set forth in subsection B of this section have been found to exist. In such cases, a variance may be granted which is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the ambulance ordinance and the public health, safety and welfare is secured. Variances may be granted for a period of no more than one year.

B.

Before any variance may be granted, it shall be shown:

1.

There are special circumstances applicable to the provider or the geographic area served that do not apply generally to other providers or geographic areas;

2.

That the literal interpretation of the ambulance ordinance would be detrimental to the public health, safety, and/or welfare;

3.

That the proposed variance will not be inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the ambulance ordinance;

4.

The applicant shall have the burden of proving the above specified criteria and the lack of opposition to the request shall not negate this requirement.

C.

Requests for variances shall be made to the operations committee in writing. Any appeals from decisions of the operations committee shall be made in writing to the board of county commissioners within ten days of the decision.

(Ord. 10091 § 12, 1992)