



2011 National EMS Assessment now available

The Federal Interagency Committee for Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) has released the 2011 National EMS Assessment. Sponsored by FICEMS and funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the report provides the first-ever comprehensive description of EMS, EMS emergency preparedness and 9-1-1 systems at state and national levels. The assessment provides a detailed description of the nation's EMS systems, which are comprised of an estimated 19,971 local EMS agencies, their 81,295 vehicles and 826,111 licensed and credentialed personnel. To see the report, go to www.ems.gov/news/assessment.html.

NREMT looking for new director

NREMT executive director Bill Brown is retiring after 25 years, and NREMT is looking for "an outstanding individual with visionary leadership and management skills" to take his place. The NREMT invites applications from candidates with a minimum of a bachelor's degree (graduate degree preferred) and the abilities and experience described on the NREMT website. Applications will be accepted through May 31, 2012. To view the abilities and experience necessary, go to NREMT.org and click on "Executive Director Search" under Quick Links.

Highway deaths drop to lowest number since 1949

Highway deaths fell to 32,885 in 2010, the lowest level since 1949. The record-breaking decline in traffic fatalities occurred even as American drivers traveled more miles in 2010, an increase of 1.6 percent over 2009. The information shows 2010 also saw the lowest fatality rate ever recorded, with 1.10 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2010, down from 1.15 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2009. Other key statistics include:

- Fatalities declined in most categories in 2010, including for occupants of passenger cars and light trucks (including SUVs, minivans and pickups).
- Deaths in crashes involving drunk drivers dropped 4.9 percent in 2010, taking 10,228 lives compared to 10,759 in 2009.
- Fatalities rose among pedestrians, motorcycle riders, and large truck occupants.

NHTSA also unveiled a new measure of fatalities related to distracted driving, called "distraction-affected crashes." Introduced for 2010 as a way to get better information about the role of distraction in crashes, the new measure is designed to focus more narrowly on crashes in which a driver was most likely to have been distracted. While NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) previously recorded a broad range of potential distractions, such as careless driving and the presence of a cell phone in the vehicle, the new measure focuses on distractions that are most likely to affect crash involvement, such as distraction by dialing a cellular phone or texting and distraction by an outside person/event. Using its refined methodology, NHTSA found an estimated 3,092 fatalities in distraction-affected crashes in 2010.



Tips may help make funding request a success

Has your area suffered a devastating event that might qualify you for Extraordinary Emergency Funding? The Extraordinary Emergency Fund is available to assist licensed EMS providers, hospitals and registered first responder organizations if unforeseeable events cause a degradation of service to the community. Situations that may severely reduce or incapacitate emergency response capability are considered extraordinary emergencies. You can increase your chances of success in requesting funding by remembering these simple guidelines:



- Organizations eligible to apply include: licensed EMS providers, licensed hospitals and registered first responder organizations.
- Your organization must be meeting its Regional Advisory Council (RAC) participation requirements. Contact your RAC to verify this requirement.
- Requests are evaluated to determine whether there will be a degradation in the service you currently provide to your community if the request is not fulfilled. Degradation of service is considered a change in the status of the EMS/trauma or emergency services within a community causing a **lowering** of the level of service provided to the community or area.
- Items cannot be purchased prior to receiving a contract. This fund is not a reimbursement grant. Items funded can only be purchased during the contract period once the grant is awarded.
- In the case of a malfunctioning piece of equipment, include with your request the documents showing the repair history of the product. Other helpful documentation could include a supportive statement from the manufacturer indicating that the product is outdated and cannot be fixed.
- Extraordinary Emergency Funding is not available for equipment upgrades or enhancement of services. Please contact our office or your local EMS regional staff about the annual Local Projects Grant for non-emergency funding opportunities.

After a request has been funded, your organization must send in receipts to verify purchase of the requested items/services. You also will be required to send an impact statement of how the funding has helped your organization and community at large.

Recent awards:

Uvalde EMS - \$32,000 for an ambulance remount

Grants available for ECA training

Are you in a rural area that needs more EMS personnel? DSHS has a total of \$10,000 left this fiscal year available for EMS training programs, registered first responder organizations (FROs), coordinators and instructors to conduct ECA courses in rural or underserved areas of the state lacking local EMS training resources. Grant funds cover the cost of instruction and textbooks, as well as other expenses such as printing and supplies. OEMS/TS will accept grant applications on a first-come-first-served basis until the funds run out for the fiscal year. Eligibility requirements for ECAT grants: A minimum of three students; students must agree to perform emergency care attendant services for at least one year with a local emergency medical service provider or first responder organization; services must be provided in a designated rural or underserved area of Texas, as determined by zip code or county; and the course coordinator must be affiliated with an educational program. And give yourself plenty of time: It takes about 60 days for an ECAT grant to work its way through the DSHS approval process. For more information, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/TrainingFunding.shtm or contact Roxanne Cuellar at (512) 834-6700 ext. 2377 or roxanne.cuellar@dshs.state.tx.us. For a list of all EMS and trauma funding available through DSHS, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/efunding.shtm.

Recent awards:

Edwards County EMS

East Coke County Ambulance Service



On Duty

TMB seeks EMS medical directors for panel



The Texas Medical Board is seeking EMS medical directors to serve on complaint review panels. Texas law requires the panel to be composed of physicians who represent the best of the medical profession, are licensed to practice medicine in Texas, are board-certified, have no history of licensure restriction, no history of peer discipline, an acceptable malpractice complaint history, and are in active practice in the state of Texas as defined by Board Rule Sec. 163.11. Experience in peer review is preferred.

When Texas Medical Board has a complaint regarding someone who specializes in emergency or prehospital medicine, panelists receive an e-mail or call asking if the physician is able to do a review. Panelists can accept only as many cases as they feel comfortable doing. Panelists do not have to travel to Austin to do reviews. The information about the complaint is available through an internet connection, primarily patient medical records. There is reimbursement of \$100/hour for reviewers. Reviewers then write an opinion regarding the standard of care. TMB has online training and staff to help as needed. Generally, reviews need to be completed within three weeks. Reviewers do not have to testify at hearings, although they may be asked to look at the respondent's rebuttal. Questions? Contact Amanda Bloodgood, Panelist Coordinator, at Amanda.Bloodgood@tmb.state.tx.us.

Frequently asked questions: Certification

Q: *Can I earn CEs on a topic more than once during a certification period?*

A: Yes. Courses such as EKG interpretation **can** be repeated one time during your four-year certification period. Also, courses such as BTLS, PHTLS, ACLS, PALS or CPR can be repeated **once** in the four-year reporting period as most of these are two-year courses and would be required to be repeated during a DSHS four-year certification period. Please visit our website for more information about CEs at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems.

Q: *I want to submit my EMT Renewal certification application online, but I am having trouble adding my certification to my profile. How can I correct this and submit my Renewal application?*

A: The reason the new online application system works so efficiently is because it is a direct link to the EMS Certification database. Therefore, the way you enter your name has to be exactly the way EMS Certification staff have it entered in the EMS Certification database in order for the system to match up your certification with your profile. If you have not entered your middle name, or forgot to add a suffix (such as JR), the system will not recognize it as a match to your certification. The best advice is to look at how your name is typed on your EMS Certification card, or look up your certification on the Check Certification Status link, to see exactly how your name appears in the EMS Certification database. This will enable the system to match the profile you created to your EMS Certification. You can access the Check Certification Status link at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/newcert.shtm.

And you can access the online Recertification application submission link on the DSHS EMS and Trauma Systems website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/txonlinelinks.shtm. If you have additional questions concerning application submission, feel free to contact the EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6734.

Q: *I needed some extra time to attain all the continuing education (CE) hours required for EMT Recertification, and I am going to submit my EMT Renewal application a few days after my certification expiration date. Can I still submit the EMT Recertification application using the online recertification application?*

A: Yes. According to rule, if you submit your Renewal after midnight of the certification expiration date, you will have to submit a signed Skills Proficiency for Late Renewal form, and you will have to pay a late fee. Also according to rule, as of midnight on your expiration date, you are technically expired and no longer able to work in EMS until your renewal application has been processed/approved, and your certification has been renewed. You can still submit your renewal application electronically, and the fee assessed will include the late fee. You will *not* be able to electronically attach the signed Skills Proficiency for Late Renewal form, so that signed form will need to be faxed to the EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6714. The Skills Verification form can be found on the EMS website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm.

If you have any further questions, you can contact the Texas EMS Certification office at (512) 834-6734.