



Position Statement

Discrimination in EMS

Statement: NAEMT believes that discrimination in the EMS workplace is unacceptable and should never be condoned or overlooked. All EMS personnel should be able to work in an environment and culture free from discrimination so they may focus their efforts on quality patient care.

Likewise, all patients have a right to emergency medical care that is provided without organizational or personal bias. No patient should be denied care, or receive sub-standard care as a consequence of discrimination.

All EMS agencies should establish and enforce a solid body of organizational policy that protects both EMS personnel and patients from discrimination in the EMS workplace.

Background: When EMS practitioners receive a call for help, they respond. EMS serves every person, regardless of who they are, where they live, or what they believe in. The principles of respect and equality are fundamental to the provision of EMS and should extend to those who have chosen EMS as a profession.

The EMS workplace should be free from discrimination against race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, military obligations, marital status, socio-economic status, or disease status (such as HIV, Hepatitis C or drug addiction). Specifically, EMS personnel should be protected from discrimination in employment related decisions covering hiring and termination, compensation, promotions, shift scheduling, station assignments and disciplinary action.

Similarly, EMS patients should be afforded protection against discrimination. The actions, comments and decisions of EMS personnel should be provided in an environment that respects the diversity of the patients being served. EMS decisions and actions concerning treatment, patient transportation, hospital destination, and ancillary services should be made without bias.

Each EMS agency should ensure that adequate policies are in place to protect their employees and patients from discrimination. Such policies should include all federal, state, and local legal requirements that protect against discrimination. Agency policies against employee discrimination, as well as the obligations of employees to provide patient care without discrimination, should be clearly spelled out in the agency's employee handbook.

Introductory employee training should include a discussion on employee and patient discrimination issues and agency policies covering these issues. Agency discrimination policies should be reviewed regularly with employees, and enforced consistently.

Adopted: August 12, 2016