

**OKALOOSA COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

Title: Use of Electronic Communication Devices
Policy: 421.00
Purpose: To ensure full attention to patient care and operational activities at all times.

Policy:

Any contact necessary between dispatch, medic units, Shift Supervisors, hospitals, etc., will be done through department issued equipment.

Any contact with family, friends, and other non-business communication will be conducted via personal cellular telephone.

Personal cellular phones may be used with discretion, i.e., at your station or after completion of a call. (See OCEMS SOP 110.00) Cell phones, both personal and EMS issued, are **not** to be used when operating the ambulance, providing patient care (either as phone, text, social media, or music device), or to routinely give a patient report to the Emergency Room. Camera and video options will not be used to capture any patient images in accordance with HIPAA privacy rules (See OCEMS SOP 119.00). This includes on-scene, during transport or at the receiving facility. In cases of radio failure, it is acceptable to utilize the county cell phone to contact dispatch or relay patient information. It is prohibited to have or use personal **electronic devices** in the patient compartment or in the Okaloosa County Communications Center at any time.

EMS issued cell phones are to be used for conducting EMS business only.

1. The cell phone issued for each medical unit is to be carried by one crewmember at all times.
2. EMS business numbers are stored in the phonebook of each cell phone. Do **NOT** add or delete numbers without proper authorization. Keypads will remain 'locked' to prevent errors. NOTE: Phone logs are printed and reviewed monthly.
3. All hospital phone numbers are Emergency Department phone numbers. Long distance ED numbers for out of county transfers are included.
4. If not feasible, communication with a cell phone should be done as a "phone patch" through OCEMS Dispatch to ensure the call is recorded.
5. If possible, all phone and radio communications shall be handled by the passenger or attendant. At no time will the driver operate a cell phone or electronic device.

Accountability and Compliance:

1. It is the responsibility of all OCEMS employees to comply with this SOG and use discretion regarding the use of both personal and EMS issued electronic communication devices while on duty, and to maintain the privacy of every patient and secure protected health information according to law.
2. Any witnessed use of personal cell phone or use of electronic communication device in prohibited areas will be reported to the On-duty Shift Commander ASAP.
3. Any use of personal cell phone (or other electronic device) in prohibited areas will be investigated and reported to the Chief.

Policy #: 421.00
CAAS: 106.07.01
Author: Bailey
Reviewed: Leadership
Approved: Leadership
Status: Active
Effective Date: 5/16/2016
Revision Date: 5/16/2016