

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

=====

Meeting Date: **July 22, 2025**

Department: **Public Safety**

=====

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Title: Emergency Medical Services Ordinance Revision

Summary: At the February 11, 2025 Board of County Commissioners meeting, staff were directed to conduct a workshop on revisions to the Emergency Medical Services Ordinance. The purpose of this workshop is to provide an overview of the proposed revisions to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Ordinance. To guide this process, an EMS Ordinance Committee (Committee) was formed by the EMS Advisory Council. The Committee is composed of representatives from Palm Beach County and Municipality Fire Rescue Department staff, and EMS Advisory Council members. A summary of proposed revisions to the EMS Ordinance is provided in the attached Presentation. Key areas of the proposed ordinance revisions include the following: clarification of terminology, review of response times, application requirements, enforcement, and inclusion of COPCN holders rules and regulations. **Countywide** (SB)

Background and Policy Issues: Palm Beach County Code, Chapter 13, Article II, Division I, EMS Ordinance, is promulgated pursuant to Chapter 401, Florida Statutes. The purpose of this Division is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the County in need of emergency medical services by establishing standards for issuing certificates of public convenience and necessity for Primary, Secondary, and Special Secondary Service Providers, and regulating the Areas and the operation of services as described herein. On October 22, 2024, the Palm Beach County EMS Ordinance underwent a substantive revision in Section 13-22 following a vote by the Board of County Commissioners to amend the EMS Ordinance and direct staff to open up an additional application period to accept and process Secondary Provider Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) applications. Given that the last major revision to the EMS Ordinance occurred on October 17, 2017, a comprehensive review and update is necessary to reflect current developments and changes within the EMS landscape in Palm Beach County.

Attachments:

- 1) Presentation

=====

Recommended By:



Department Director

 6/18/25

Date

Approved By:



Assistant County Administrator

7/9/25

Date

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Years	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>2029</u>
Personal Services					
Operating Costs					
Capital Expenditures					
External Revenues					
Program Income (County)					
In-Kind Match (County)					
Net Fiscal Impact	*				

ADDITIONAL FTE

POSITIONS (Cumulative)	0	0	0	0	0
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

Is Item Included In Current Budget? Yes _____ No _____
Is this item using Federal Funds? Yes _____ No _____
Is this item using State Funds? Yes _____ No _____

Budget Account Exp No: Fund _____ Dept. _____ Unit _____ Obj. _____ Prog. _____
Rev No: Fund _____ Dept. _____ Unit _____ Rev. _____ Prog. _____

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

*There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: Heim


III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

Lucy Muth
OFMB
6/12/2025
JA 6/18
VS 6/12

Brundage
Contract Administration 26 4/12/25

B. Legal Sufficiency:


Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

This summary is not to be used as a basis for payment.



**Palm Beach County
Public Safety Department,
Division of Emergency
Management**

July 22, 2025 Workshop

**Proposed Emergency Medical
Services Ordinance Revisions**



EMS Ordinance

- FL Statute Ch. 401.25 authorizes Counties to adopt ordinances that provide standards for issuing Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) for providing ALS services as well as ALS and BLS transportation services.
- Palm Beach County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Ordinance outlines requirements for COPCNs in accordance with State guidelines.
- Palm Beach County EMS Ordinance also provides authority to the county to regulate areas and operation of services provided by COPCN holders.



Background – Since 2017

Date	Action
October 17, 2017	Current EMS Ordinance was adopted by the BCC.
December 4, 2018	BCC revised the EMS Ordinance to modify the Special Secondary Service providers required entity experience and added conditions that require after 6 months it will be determined by the Primary Provider that the entity has demonstrated the ability to meet the public safety goals and operating requirements.
December 21, 2021	BCC adopted a revision to the EMS Ordinance to allow special secondary service applicants that do not have audited financial statements to instead submit reviewed financial statements along with a written acknowledgment from the affected Community Association confirming and acknowledging that the applicant does not have audited financial statements.
January 2022	County staff begins ordinance reviews.
November 2023	EMS Ordinance Revision Committee formed.
May 7, 2024	BCC directed staff to provide an update on EMS Ordinance, specifically on the Secondary COPCN process.
October 22, 2024	BCC adopted a revision to the EMS Ordinance to establish a process for opening an additional Secondary Provider COPCN application period if there is a public safety need to add additional Secondary Providers and allow for the issuance of additional Secondary Provider COPCNs, prior to the end of the current six (6) year term outlined in the EMS Ordinance.
February 11, 2025	BCC directed staff to present proposed EMS Ordinance revisions at an upcoming workshop.





EMS Ordinance Proposed Revision Timeline

Date	Event
June/July 2025	BCC Briefings (EMS Ordinance revisions overview)
July 17, 2025	EMS Council Meeting (EMS Ordinance revisions overview)
July 22, 2025	BCC Workshop presenting ordinance revisions overview to the BCC
September 18, 2025	EMS Council Meeting (Final EMS Ordinance Revision presentation)
October 22, 2025	League of Cities (Final EMS Ordinance Revision presentation)
November 4, 2025	BCC – EMS Ordinance First Reading
December 2, 2025	BCC - EMS Ordinance Final Adoption





Emergency Medical Services Ordinance Revision





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-18: Definitions

General Changes

- Definitions were added/updated to align with Florida State Statutes and to align with current EMS Program best practices within Palm Beach County.
- Entire document was updated to reflect any changes to the definitions.

Significant Changes

- Subscription Service Program
 - Definition of Subscription Service Program was removed from the ordinance.
 - Removing this term does not impact current secondary service provider having agreements with HOA's to provide transports to medical appointments and does not prohibit any secondary providers from responding to emergency medical calls upon the request of a Primary Service Provider.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-20: COPCN and Endorsements Required

General Changes

- Language was added to clarify that Secondary Service Providers must contact the Primary Service Provider when requested for medical assistance that warrants Transport to an emergency room.
- Each COPCN shall now indicate a start date; valid date is already included.

Significant Changes

- Secondary Service Providers located in Palm Beach County may apply for Air Ambulance Service Endorsement; however, they may only provide said services when Palm Beach County Primary Service Provider(s) are not available or determines that additional Air Ambulances are needed.
 - If the request for service is not available through PBC or a Secondary Service Provider COPCN air ambulance holder, a private entity outside the county may be called.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-20: COPCN and Endorsements Required (Continued)

Significant Changes

- Allows a Fire Department that does not provide Primary Provider Services to apply for a Special Secondary Service Provider COPCN to serve the community within their jurisdiction. The Fire Department will still need to establish an MOU with the Primary Provider.
- Private entities may continue to apply for a Primary Service Provider COPCN. However, the municipality/jurisdiction must have an agreement with the private entity to provide EMS services.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-21: Exclusions From COPCN and/or Permit Requirements

General Changes

- Added language to include volunteer ambulance exemptions to align with FL Statute Section 401.25

Significant Changes

- None





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-22: Application for a COPCN

General Changes

- All application requirements were added to the ordinance.
- Modified requirement for applicant to provide proof of satisfactory completion of all vehicle and staff inspection for the last three (3) years instead of six (6).





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-22: Application for a COPCN (continued)

General Changes

- Requirement to provide the specific type of COPCN with the required Service Endorsements as well as the specific Area(s) or Community they intend to serve.
- Modified Public Notice timeframe for COPCN application to no later 210 days (7 months) and no less than 150 days (5 months) and removed any time frames associated with when applications will be accepted.
- Existing Primary Service Providers in good standing within the County will be able to re-apply using an abbreviated COPCN re-certification.

Significant Changes

- None





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-24: Board Approval Required for COPCN

General Changes

- None

Significant Changes

- Modified that the Board may grant or modify a COPCN at any time to facilitate Pilot Program Services. Current language only allows this outside of the application period.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-25: Rights and Duties

General Changes

- None

Significant Changes

- If Primary Service Provider is unable to respond to their area, the contiguous Primary COPCN holder is required to respond, within reason.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-26: Vehicle Permits

General Changes

- Revised vehicle inspection procedures to allow staff to conduct inspections randomly and/or on a routine basis, which is consistent with State EMS Office practices.

Significant Changes

- None.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-28: Provision of patient outcome data.

General Changes

- Clarifying language was added to explain that outcome patient data is collected to support its use by EMS provider agencies.

Significant Changes

- None





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-29: Response Times for Secondary Service Providers

Transfer Type	Current Requirement	Proposed Requirement
Alert or Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response time within 10 minutes of the transport request Average of 10 minutes must be maintained for all calls each month. Patient must be ready within 30 minutes of the unit arriving or unit may leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response time within <u>15</u> minutes of the transport request. <u>15 minutes must be maintained for 90% of the calls each month.</u> Patient must be ready <u>immediately</u> upon unit arriving or unit may leave.
Urgent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response time within 30 minutes of the agreed upon scheduled time. 30 minutes must be maintained for 90% of the calls each month. Patient must be ready within 30 minutes of the unit arriving or unit may leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response time within 30 minutes <u>of the transport request.</u> No change Patient must be ready within <u>15</u> minutes of the unit arriving or unit may leave.
During Scheduled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response time within 15 minutes of the agreed upon scheduled time. 15 minutes must be maintained for 90% of the calls each month. Patient must be ready within 30 minutes of the unit arriving or unit may leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change No change Patient must be ready within 30 minutes of scheduled time or unit may leave.
For Ambulance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of 5 minute turn out time once transport request is received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Removed 5 minute turnout time</u> requirements for safety reasons.





Overview of Ordinance Revisions

Section 13-33: Enforcement

General Changes

- TBD

Significant Changes

- Enforcement – A remedial action plan may be required when average response time requirements are not met over a minimum time period of 1 month versus 3 months.





Recap of Significant Ordinance Revisions

Subscription Service Program – Remove the definition for Subscription Service Program and/or include grandfather language.

Municipal Fire Departments – Special Secondary Service Provider - Allow municipal fire departments that are not Primary Service Providers to apply for a Special Secondary COPCN to deliver non-transport ALS services until the Primary Provider arrives.

Air Ambulance Secondary Providers - Allow PBC private entities to apply for an Air Ambulance Secondary COPCN to provide interfacility transports.

Pilot Program Services - Allow the BCC to grant or modify a COPCN at any time to facilitate Pilot Program Services.

Primary Service Providers –

- a) Require Primary Service Providers to respond to calls within a contiguous Primary Service Provider's area, within reason.
- b) Private entities may continue to apply for a Primary Service Provider COPCN. However, the municipality/jurisdiction must have an agreement with the private entity to provide EMS services.

Air Ambulance Turnout Time - Remove the Air Ambulance turnout/response time requirement due to safety concerns.

Secondary Interfacility Transport Response - Modify response time standards for Secondary Service Providers performing interfacility transports.

Enforcement – A remedial action plan may be required when average response time requirements are not met over a minimum period of 1 month vs. 3 months.





Items for BCC Consideration that are not part of proposed revisions to current EMS Ordinance

1. Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) Requirement

- Should we require Secondary Services Providers to have an AVL system in place for COPCN application? *(Currently, we ask for the provider to identify whether they have one.)*

2. Experience Requirement for Secondary Providers

- Should we implement a requirement for a minimum number of consecutive years of ALS Transport Service experience for Secondary and Special Secondary Service Providers? *(Currently, experience is only required for supervisory staff, but not for companies.)*

3. Mid-Term Application Process

- Should we retain the mid-term application process for Secondary Service Providers?

4. Interfacility Transports – Do we continue to prohibit governmental entities from providing interfacility transfers? *(Currently, governmental entities are prohibited from providing interfacility transfers, unless contacted through 911.)*



THANK YOU!

