



CHARLOTTE VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES, INC.

P. O. Box 85, Charlotte, VT 05445-0085

Business: (802) 425-3111 • Fax: (802) 425-3115



17 April 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Response to suspension of paramedic license at CVFRS.

This letter is to let you know that Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services (CVFRS Inc.) has been informed by the EMS District 3 medical advisor that its license to operate at the paramedic level has been suspended for a period of 3 months.

While CVFRS takes this issue extremely seriously, it is important to note **that CVFRS has not been charged with any missing narcotics or other controlled substances, nor has there been any concern raised about quality of care provision (i.e. protocol violation or other inappropriate medical care).**

Who did the investigation? Why? Finding?

The “investigation” was conducted by the EMS District 3 board members – Dr. Laurel Plante, Chris McCarthy, and Patricia Wolff. They conducted a surprise check visit to CVFRS by EMS District 3 representatives on March 25, 2014. They inspected our system of controls for narcotics within our ambulance service. CVFRS demonstrated that such substances are kept within a locked safe. The EMS District 3 representatives determined this was not adequate for security of some of the controlled substances. In particular the District staff took issue with our use of physical keys for the safe versus an electronic keypad mechanism. They also detected that 1 out of 3 of our paramedics has not consistently completed a daily log. We met with the District 3 board on April 10, 2014 per Dr. Plante’s letter. At this meeting she announced our suspension was for 3 months and proposed an improvement plan.

We have been under a conditional 6 month license from January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014 for CQI (i.e. quality control) documentation deficiencies by the State of Vermont EMS. We have complied with all the stipulations per this conditional license including – submission of all training records, monthly CQI reports to the District 3 Medical Advisor, Dr. Plante.

What we are doing to address the issues?

- CVFRS has already corrected this by removing keys from the 3 paramedics involved and initiating a computer code system. This was corrected within the first week. It was also demonstrated to the District representatives that CVFRS has an electronic key fob system in place for the entire building to document and secure access. This includes external surveillance cameras, internal surveillance cameras, and computer recorded key fob access.

- There was identified an inconsistency in filling out the daily narcotics log check with one new Paramedic. This has also been corrected.
- CVFRS has already begun updating its paramedic operation plan for the EMS District 3 board. This is part of the remediation plan expressed by the District.
- We have engaged our Advisory Board to assist with this issue. Specifically, Dr. Ruth Uphold has volunteered to work with CVFRS to remediate our plan.
- CVFRS is collecting information and documentation to respond to the findings of the District 3 board. We understand the concerns of the District but are doing our own internal research to gather the most factual information possible.
- CVFRS has contacted the State of VT EMS and requested a meeting to discuss this ruling and related issues with the District.

Who is actually affected – paramedics? EMTs also? How many are there of each?

CVFRS has 2 active paramedics. Both of their individual certifications are unaffected by this decision. *It is important to note that the suspension was not due any concern or issue with clinical care provision.* The decision affects the ability of the District to extend Medical Control to CVFRS at the paramedic level for 3 months. This means that we as a service can only operate at the Advanced EMT level for the next 3 months.

Were paramedics suspended or just medical services?

No paramedics have been suspended. This decision only affects our service's ability to operate at the paramedic level under the District Medical Director's authority.

Which specific services are suspended? What services will continue during the suspension?

What are the dates of the suspension? Specifically, we cannot offer pain medications, cannot intubate a patient, and can not manually operate a defibrillator. While we have lost some tools and medical interventions we have not lost the higher quality expertise and knowledge of our 2 certified paramedics.

We can still provide airway management as well as treat hypoglycemic diabetic emergencies, opiate overdoses, and allergic reactions, We can provide epinephrine administration for cardiac arrest, defibrillate, manage childbirth, CPAP, IO access for medication/fluid administration, and other Basic and Advance Life Support intervention. In short, CVRS will still be able to provide emergency services a level equal to or greater than our surrounding communities.

We have asked for clarification on the dates of suspension and are awaiting response from the EMS District 3 Medical Director, Dr. Laurel Plante.

Who is responsible for overseeing the paramedics and the controlled substances?

CVFRS Rescue Operations Manager David Stewart is responsible for the oversight of paramedics operating at CVFRS. EMTs are trained and instructed by the Rescue Operations.

CVFRS remains fully committed to maintaining a top level emergency response service for Charlotte while navigating the complex network of national, state and regional regulations.

Respectfully,

David McNally
CVFRS Inc, Corporate President