

By: Melissa Kinnaird, Interim Director

### **Director Column - August 2014**

This will be another rather lengthy column. I apologize. There has been some confusion related to the training institutes. Right now there are approximately 36 training institutes. (I will provide a listing of those later in this column and under the Education section of the EMS Programs page.) All EMS agencies do not have to be designated as a training institute. Smaller agencies can affiliate with a larger agency that is designated as a training institute. Or, smaller agencies can work together as a training institute. There isn't necessarily a one-size fits all approach to resolving the issue of getting training approved and provided in an efficient and effective manner that meets the new requirements. I know that by working together, being collaborative and creative, we can overcome this barrier. The barrier is currently preventing the full utilization of the CIS for online certification. By getting all continuing education accounted for in CIS, we will have a seamless online recertification process that will benefit all of us.

### **Current Training Institutes**

- Pierpont Community and Technical College
- RESA 7
- Shirley M Kimble Training Center
- WV Rural Emergency Trauma Institute
- Blueridge Community and Technical College
- EPEMSES
- Hardy County CPR and Training Resources Center
- RESA 8
- US Customs & Border Protection, Advanced Training
- RESA 5
- RESA VI
- WV ACEP-ITLS
- WV Northern Community and Technical College
- WVU - Parkersburg
- New River Community and Technical College
- Peterstown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue
- Pocahontas Memorial Hospital and Ambulance Service
- Princeton Rescue Squad
- RESA 1
- Air Evac EMS Inc.
- Appalachian First Response
- Boone County Ambulance Authority
- Cabell County EMS
- Charleston Fire Department
- Dunlow Fire and EMS
- HealthNet, Inc.
- Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority
- Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College
- Lincoln Emergency Medical Services
- Mason County Emergency Ambulance Service Authority
- Mountwest Community and Technical College
- Putnam County EMS
- RESA III
- Southern WV Community and Technical College
- West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services
- Whitesville Fire Dept. Inc.

A second issue I would like to address this month is the use of lights and sirens. This has been a hot topic in a couple different meetings I have attended lately. It is not just an issue in WV either. Pennsylvania has at least one ambulance crash per day. That is a staggering statistic. WV does not have a mechanism to track the number of ambulance crashes that we experience. However, the National Highway Training Safety Administration (NHTSA) does keep such statistics

from a national perspective at [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov). Thanks to Gail Dragoo, Dr. Mills and Bill Weese for helping me with researching this information. Additional resources are provided under the Regulations section of this website.

The WV Code related to use of lights and sirens states:

**§17C-2-5. Authorized emergency vehicles.**

(a) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions herein stated.

(b) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:

- (1) Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter;
- (2) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;
- (3) Exceed the speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property;
- (4) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement of turning in specified directions.

(c) The exemptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when the driver of any said vehicle while in motion sounds audible signal by bell, siren, or exhaust whistle as may be reasonably necessary, and when the vehicle is equipped with at least one lighted flashing lamp as authorized by section twenty-six, article fifteen of this chapter which is visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of such vehicle, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display a warning light visible from in front of the vehicle.

(d) The foregoing provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons, nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of others.

(The following excerpt is provided by the WV State Police):

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA LAWS AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE OPERATION OF AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLES.**

**Chapter 17C, Article 1, Section 5 of the Code of West Virginia.**

Definition of . . . Authorized Emergency Vehicle  
"Authorized Emergency Vehicle" means vehicles of the fire department, police vehicles, and such ambulances and emergency vehicles of municipal departments or public service corporations as are designated or authorized by the commissioner or the chief of police of an incorporated city, and such privately owned ambulances and emergency vehicles as are designated by the Commissioner.

**Chapter 17C, Article 2, Section 5 of the Code of West Virginia.**

(a) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when responding to an emergency call or when in the pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law or when responding to but not upon returning from a fire alarm, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions herein stated:

(b) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:

1. Park or stand, irrespective of the provisions of this chapter;
2. Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation;
3. Exceed the speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property.
4. Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

(c) The exemptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when the driver of any said vehicle while in motion sounds audible signal by bell, siren, or exhaust whistle as may be reasonably necessary, and when the vehicle is equipped with at least one lighted lamp displaying a red light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of such vehicle, except that an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle need not be equipped with or display a red light visible from in front of the vehicle.

(d) The foregoing provisions shall not relieve the driver of an authorized emergency vehicle from the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons nor shall such provisions protect the driver from the consequences of his reckless disregard for the safety of others.

**Chapter 17C, Article 9, Section 5 of the Code of West Virginia.**

Operation of vehicles and streetcars on approach of authorized emergency vehicles.

(a) Upon the immediate approach of an authorized vehicle equipped with at least one lighted lamp exhibiting red light visible under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet to the front of such vehicle other than a police vehicle when operated as an authorized emergency vehicle, and when the driver is giving audible signal by siren, exhaust whistle or bell:

1. The driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right of way and shall immediately drive to a position to the righthand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.

2. Upon the approach of an authorized emergency vehicle, as above stated, the motorman of every streetcar shall immediately stop such car clear of any intersection and keep it in such position until the authorized emergency has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.

**Chapter 17C, Article 15, Section 26, Sub-Section "d" of the Code of West Virginia.**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, the following color of flashing warning lights are restricted for the use of the type of vehicle designated:

1. Blue flashing warning lights are restricted to police vehicles except as authorized by section 27 of this article.
2. Except as authorized by sections 19 and 27 of this article, red flashing warning lights are restricted to ambulances, fire fighting vehicles, school buses, wreckers and the personal car or truck of those volunteer firemen who are authorized by their fire chief to have such lights.
3. All other emergency vehicles authorized by this chapter and by section 27 of this article shall be restricted to amber or yellow flashing warning lights.

It shall be unlawful for flashing warning lights of an authorized color to be installed or used on a vehicle other than as specified in this section, except that a police vehicle may be equipped with either or both blue or red warning lights.