



Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
Effective Date:	02/01/2026
Revision #:	1
Page No.:	1 of 8

Policy No. OEMS-SER-001

APPROVAL:		2/13/2026
	Michael Johnson, Director, Office of EMS and Trauma	Date
		2/13/2026
	Patrick McDougal, MD, State EMS Medical Director, Office of EMS and Trauma	Date

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish minimum requirements for patient care protocols for Ground Ambulance and Air Ambulance services to provide a standardized approach to the practice of patient care in the out of hospital setting.

2.0 AUTHORITY

The Georgia Department of Public Health, Office of EMS and Trauma (“Department”), Minimum Required Patient Care Protocols Policy OEMS-SER-001 is published under the authority of the Department and in compliance with the following:

- 2.1 Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) § 31-11-1 et seq
- 2.2 EMS Rules and Regulations Chapter 511-9-2:
 - 5.2.1 Rule 511-9-2-.06
 - 5.2.2 Rule 511-9-2-.07

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 “Air Ambulance Service” means an agency or company operating under a valid license from the Department that uses Air Ambulances to provide Ambulance Service.
- 3.2 “Biennial” means occurring every two years.
- 3.3 “EMS” means emergency medical services.

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	2 of 8

- 3.4** "EMS Rules" means the Department's Rules and Regulations, Chapter 511-9-2.
- 3.5** "Department" means the Georgia Department of Public Health, Office of EMS and Trauma.
- 3.6** "Georgia Scope of Practice for EMS Personnel" means the Department's policy that outlines the parameters of duties or services that an individual with a Georgia EMS License is licensed to perform.
- 3.7** "Ground Ambulance Service" means an agency or company operating under a valid license from the Department that uses Ground Ambulances to provide Ambulance Service.
- 3.8** "Protocol" means prehospital treatment guidelines, approved by the local EMS Medical Director, used to manage an emergency medical condition in the field by outlining the permissible and appropriate medical treatment that may be rendered by EMS Personnel to a patient experiencing a medical emergency or injury.
- 3.9** "Stroke Screening Tool" means a tool utilized to quickly identify the most common stroke symptoms and determine if a stroke is suspected.
- 3.10** "Stroke Severity Tool" means a detailed numerical assessment utilized to measure the degree of neurological impairment after a stroke has been suspected, will also identify patients with symptoms of Large Vessel Occlusion (LVO) to determine the most appropriate destination for the patient.

4.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Ground Ambulance and Air Ambulance Services licensed by the Department. This policy does not include an exhaustive list of available protocols and is not intended to prohibit services from adding additional protocols.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All Ground Ambulance and Air Ambulance Services are required to have a minimum set of protocols for the assessment, treatment, and transportation of both adult and pediatric patients by EMS personnel.

- 5.1** Any new Ground Ambulance or Air Ambulance license issued on or after March 1, 2026, must meet the requirements within this policy.

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	3 of 8

- 5.2** All currently licensed Ground Ambulance or Air Ambulance agencies shall meet the requirements of this policy for license renewal on or after January 1, 2027.
- 5.3** Protocols should be physician driven and developed from evidence-based and/or consensus-based guidelines such as the National Association of EMS Officials (NASEMSO) Model EMS Clinical Guidelines.
- 5.4** Protocols must be reviewed and updated if needed at minimum on a biennial basis.
- 5.5** Each protocol shall not exceed the Georgia Scope of Practice for EMS Personnel.
- 5.6** The protocols must include guidance regarding the Scope of Practice for each provider license level operating within the agency whether by inclusion of the current Georgia Scope of Practice document or identification within each protocol.
- 5.7** The protocols must be signed and dated upon review or update by the EMS Service’s Authorized Agent and Medical Director.
- 5.8** Each protocol must include the following:
 - 5.8.1** Inclusion criteria for protocol;
 - 5.8.2** Patient assessment requirements;
 - 5.8.3** Acceptable treatments and/or interventions;
 - 5.8.4** Infection control precautions, if applicable;
 - 5.8.5** Functional needs considerations, if applicable;
 - 5.8.6** Abuse and Maltreatment guidance and reporting, if applicable;
 - 5.8.7** Criteria for transport destination of critical patients in the setting of time-critical conditions; and
 - 5.8.8** Criteria for Air Medical Transportation, if applicable and not addressed in an individual air medical transportation protocol.

6.0 REQUIRED PROTOCOLS

- 6.1** Each Ground Ambulance and Air Ambulance service must have the following Protocols:
 - 6.1.1** General Protocols

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	4 of 8

6.1.1.1 Universal Patient Care

6.1.1.2 Patient Refusal

6.1.2 Cardiovascular Care Protocols

6.1.2.1 Adult and Pediatric Syncope and Near Syncope

6.1.2.2 Chest Pain/Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS)/ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI)

6.1.2.3 Bradycardia with a Pulse

6.1.2.4 Tachycardia with a Pulse

6.1.2.5 Implantable Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs)

6.1.2.6 Suspected Stroke/Transient Ischemic Attack, that also includes the identification and usage of a:

6.1.2.6.1 Validated Stroke Screening Tool (such as B.E.F.A.S.T.)

6.1.2.6.2 Validated Stroke Severity Tool

6.1.2.6.2.1 The Department recommends the use of FAST-ED to improve standardization and continuity for patients with suspected acute stroke.

6.1.3 Medical Care Protocols

6.1.3.1 Abdominal Pain

6.1.3.2 Agitated or Violent Patient/Behavioral Emergency

6.1.3.3 Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reaction

6.1.3.4 Altered Mental Status

6.1.3.5 Hyperglycemia

6.1.3.6 Hypoglycemia

6.1.3.7 Seizures

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	5 of 8

6.1.3.8 The following conditions must be addressed within a protocol, if not identified as an individual protocol.

6.1.3.8.1 Shock Management that includes hypovolemic, distributive, cardiogenic, and obstructive shock

6.1.3.8.2 Back Pain

6.1.3.8.3 End of Life Care/Hospice Care

6.1.3.8.4 Nausea-Vomiting

6.1.3.8.5 Pain Management

6.1.3.8.6 Sickle Cell Pain Crisis

6.1.4 Resuscitation Protocols

6.1.4.1 Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA), that addresses;

6.1.4.1.1 Ventricular Fibrillation/Ventricular Tachycardia

6.1.4.1.2 Asystole

6.1.4.1.3 Pulseless Electrical Activity (PEA)

6.1.4.2 Resuscitation in Traumatic Cardiac Arrest

6.1.4.3 Determination of Death/Withholding Resuscitative Efforts

6.1.4.4 The following topics must be addressed within a protocol, if not identified as an individual protocol.

6.1.4.4.1 Do Not Resuscitate Status/Advance Directives/Healthcare Power of Attorney (POA) Status/Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

6.1.5 Trauma Care Protocols

6.1.5.1 General Trauma Management, that also includes:

6.1.5.1.1 Reference to the current National Guideline for the Field Triage of Injured Patients

6.1.5.2 Burns

6.1.5.3 Extremity Trauma

6.1.5.4 Head Injury

6.1.5.5 Spinal Care

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	6 of 8

6.1.5.6 Trauma Mass Casualty Incident, that also includes:
6.1.5.6.1 High Threat Considerations/Active Shooter Scenario

6.1.5.7 The following conditions must be addressed within a protocol, if not identified as an individual protocol.

6.1.5.7.1 External Hemorrhage Management

6.1.5.7.2 Blast Injuries

6.1.5.7.3 Crush Injury/Crush Syndrome

6.1.5.7.4 Facial/Dental Trauma

6.1.6 Pediatric-Specific Protocols

6.1.6.1 Brief Resolved Unexplained Event (BRUE) & Active Events in Infants

6.1.6.2 Pediatric Respiratory Distress/Difficult Breathing

6.1.6.3 Neonatal Resuscitation

6.1.7 Obstetrics/Gynecology Protocols

6.1.7.1 Childbirth, that also addresses:

6.1.7.1.1 Shoulder Dystocia

6.1.7.1.2 Prolapsed Umbilical Cord

6.1.7.1.3 Breech Presentation

6.1.7.2 Eclampsia/Pre-Eclampsia

6.1.7.3 Obstetrical and Gynecological Conditions

6.1.8 Respiratory Protocols

6.1.8.1 Airway Management

6.1.8.2 Respiratory Distress that includes bronchospasm and pulmonary edema

6.1.9 Toxins and Environmental

6.1.9.1 Poisoning/Overdose Universal Care, that includes guidance for:

6.1.9.1.1 Acetylcholinesterase inhibitors exposure

Department of Public Health POLICY AND PROCEDURES Minimum Patient Care Protocols	Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
	Effective Date:	02/01/2026
	Revision #:	1
	Page No.:	7 of 8

- 6.1.9.1.2** Carbamates, nerve agents, organophosphates
- 6.1.9.1.3** Topical chemical burn stimulant poisoning/overdose
- 6.1.9.1.4** Cyanide exposure
- 6.1.9.1.5** Beta-blocker poisoning/overdose
- 6.1.9.1.6** Calcium channel blocker poisoning/overdose
- 6.1.9.1.7** Opioid poisoning/overdose
- 6.1.9.1.8** Airway/respiratory irritants/vesicants
- 6.1.9.2** Bites and Envenomation
- 6.1.9.3** Hyperthermia/Heat Exposure
- 6.1.9.4** Hypothermia/Cold Exposure
- 6.1.9.5** Drowning
- 6.1.9.6** Lightning/Lightning Strike Injury/Electrical Injury/Electrical Weapon Injury
- 6.1.9.7** The following topics must be addressed within a protocol, if not identified as an individual protocol.
 - 6.1.9.7.1** Riot Control Agents
 - 6.1.9.7.2** Dive (Scuba) Injury/Accidents

Policy No.:	OEMS-SER-001
Effective Date:	02/01/2026
Revision #:	1
Page No.:	8 of 8

7.0 REVISION HISTORY

REVISION #	REVISION DATE	REVISION COMMENTS
0	2/1/2026	Effective Date
1	2/13/2026	Removed recommended Stroke Screening Tool
2		
3		
4		
6		

8.0 RELATED FORMS

EMSMDAC Recommended Minimum Standards of Patient Clinical Care Guidelines