



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 721.01 Basic Life Support Mentoring BUREAU OF EDUCATION & TRAINING

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1 APPLICABILITY

2 All Career and Volunteer Personnel

3 POLICY

4 The Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider Development Manual will be completed by each new
5 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or EMT that is newly affiliated to the Department of Fire
6 and Rescue Services (Department) prior to being released to provide patient care
7 independently at the BLS level.

8 DEFINITIONS

- 9 ➤ **BLS Candidate** - A BLS Candidate is an individual that is authorized to provide BLS care in
10 the presence of an approved Department Mentor. The BLS Provider Development
11 Manual must be current and in their possession at all times when actively mentoring.
12
- 13 ➤ **BLS Candidate Evaluation Forms** - These are official, pre-numbered evaluations
14 furnished by the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Training Branch. Forms are used to
15 evaluate a BLS Candidate's progress and provide feedback during Mentoring. They must
16 remain in numerical order with no breaks in sequence. Additional official forms must be
17 obtained through the EMS Training Branch. Copies of forms will not be accepted as BLS
18 Provider Development incidents.
19
- 20 ➤ **BLS Provider Development** - The Department process that allows BLS Candidates to
21 increase their competency as BLS providers and assures a Department standard for
22 competency has been achieved prior to authorizing a BLS provider to independently
23 provide patient care at the BLS level within the County. BLS Provider Development is
24 accomplished through Mentoring experiences, scenario simulations, practical testing,
25 and other methods.
26
- 27 ➤ **Checklist for Manual Submission** - Form used by the BLS Candidate, Mentor, Officer,
28 and EMS Training Branch to verify all elements of the BLS Candidate's packet have been
29 completed and are included in the BLS Candidate's packet upon submission.



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- 30 ➤ **Entire Call** - Means that Mentoring actively occurred during all of the following phases
31 of an EMS incident:
- 32 • Response to the call
 - 33 • Initial scene assessment
 - 34 • Initial patient assessment
 - 35 • Treatment plan formulation
 - 36 • Treatment
 - 37 • Transport (Mentor **MUST** be present in patient compartment)
 - 38 • Transition to hospital staff
 - 39 • Report and narrative writing
 - 40 • Equipment readiness
- 41
- 42 ➤ **Mentor** - A Department member who has been designated to evaluate the knowledge
43 and skills of a BLS Candidate.
- 44
- 45 ➤ **Mentoring** - The oversight and coaching of a BLS Candidate's performance by authorized
46 Department Mentors while engaged in actual emergency medical incidents as a Mentor-
47 BLS Candidate team. Mentoring:
- 48 • May include opportunities to perform certain skills and tasks or for broader team
49 leader activities.
 - 50 • May occur for an Entire Call or a Partial Call.
 - 51 • Absolutely requires the physical presence of a Mentor at all times when treating
52 actual patients.
 - 53 • May also include scenario based manikin practice, skill-based manikin practice,
54 workbook activities, oral scenarios, quizzes, exercises, and other educational
55 activities where the BLS Candidate and Mentor actively engage.
- 56
- 57 ➤ **Newly Affiliated EMT** - A Department member who holds a current EMT certification
58 from another jurisdiction and has recently become affiliated with the Department by
59 either becoming a career member or accepted into a volunteer corporation.
- 60
- 61 ➤ **Partial Call** - Is defined as situations where the BLS candidate and his/her Mentor are
62 available for only a portion of the EMS incident but are provided an opportunity to
63 render care. A Partial Call means that Mentoring actively occurred during some portion
64 of an EMS incident. The BLS Candidate and Mentor must **BOTH** be available to provide
65 care as a **TEAM** during the portion of the incident where the mentored educational
66 experience occurred.
- 67
- 68 ➤ **Team Leader** - The leadership role on an EMS incident. The role typically involves
69 performing the patient assessment, determining the care plan, directing or performing
70 care interventions, and must include the completion of a detailed patient narrative. The
71 Team Leader is both responsible and accountable for patient care plan decisions and
72 quality of care.



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73 ➤ **Team Member** - A support role on an EMS incident. The role typically involves
74 performing skills or tasks, as directed by the Team Leader.

75 PROCEDURES

76 **MANUAL DISTRIBUTION:**

- 77 • For career members, the BLS Provider Development Manual will be distributed upon
78 successful graduation from the fire academy.
- 79 • For volunteer members, the BLS Provider Development Manual will be distributed
80 by the member's volunteer officer upon successful completion of the state written
81 and practical EMT examinations and receipt of the state issued EMT card.

82 **BLS CANDIDATE CLASSIFICATION:**

- 83 • BLS Candidates will be classified by their EMS officer into either "limited/no
84 experience" or "experienced provider." BLS Candidates with previous documented
85 experience may move directly into the Team Leader Evaluation Phase.
- 86 • Previous documented experience will consist of reliable documentation that has
87 been submitted by the BLS Candidate showing:
 - 88 ○ The provider was authorized to provide independent patient care at the BLS
89 level on 911 emergency incidents in their prior jurisdiction.
 - 90 ○ The BLS Candidate functioned as a BLS provider for at least one year and 30
91 911 emergency BLS patients.
 - 92 ○ For career members, documentation will be submitted during the training
93 academy prior to graduation.
 - 94 ○ For volunteer members, documentation will be submitted and reviewed by
95 their Corporate Volunteer Chief, or designee, and then submitted to the EMS
96 Training Branch.
 - 97 ○ ALL OTHERS WILL BE CLASSIFIED AS LIMITED/NO EXPERIENCE

98 **PERFORMANCE PHASE:**

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100 During the BLS Provider Development process, the BLS Candidate's performance will progress
101 toward competency. As their competency increases, their role will expand. A BLS Candidate
102 may begin the Mentoring process in order to become more familiar with the Howard County
103 system and/or with basic EMS skills, then progress to being a Team Member performing
104 specific BLS tasks, and gradually expand to being a BLS Team Leader. Mentors should always be
105 aware of what performance milestones have been achieved, and when it is appropriate to
106 expand the role of the BLS Candidate on emergency incidents. There are two performance
107 phases to the BLS Provider Development process. As each BLS provider is different, the phases
108 may be shorter or longer depending on the experience, proficiency, and performance of a given
109 BLS Candidate. The two phases are the BLS Development phase and the Team Leader
110 Evaluation phase.
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115 **BLS DEVELOPMENT PHASE:**

116 The BLS Candidate develops knowledge and skills while gaining experience and confidence. The
117 BLS Candidate and his/her Mentor are both providing patient care as a team. As the BLS
118 Candidate becomes more comfortable, the Mentor gradually becomes less involved in patient
119 care and the BLS Candidate develops team leadership skills. During this phase, the BLS
120 Candidate may be outside of staffing minimums. Each BLS Candidate will be evaluated using
121 the BLS Candidate Evaluation Form for each incident where the BLS Candidate participated as a
122 BLS provider Team Member or Team Leader. The BLS Candidate will fill out the BLS Candidate
123 areas of the form, attach a copy of the eMEDS report, and submit it to the Mentor who will rate
124 the BLS Candidate's performance and provide feedback to the BLS Candidate.

125 The areas of focus for this phase are:

- 126 • Department operations
- 127 • General patient care
- 128 • Developing team leadership skills
- 129 • Mastering BLS competency

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131 **TEAM LEADER EVALUATION PHASE:**

132 The BLS Candidate is expected to function as the Team Leader on the scene and during
133 transport while under the constant supervision of a designated Mentor at ALL times. The goal
134 for the BLS Candidate is to complete the primary performance objectives while having their
135 performance rated by a Mentor at the level of "independent function" (1) on at least ten
136 consecutive incidents, five of which the BLS Candidate will have functioned as the primary
137 patient care provider for a priority 3 patient or higher. Each BLS Candidate will be evaluated
138 using the BLS Candidate Evaluation Form for each incident where the BLS Candidate
139 participated as a BLS provider Team Member or Team Leader. The BLS Candidate will fill out
140 the BLS Candidate areas of the form, attach a copy of the eMEDS report, and submit it to the
141 Mentor who will rate the BLS Candidate's performance and provide feedback to the BLS
142 Candidate. ***During this phase, the BLS Candidate should essentially require no prompting from
143 the Mentor regarding skills and call management.***

144 The areas of focus for this phase are:

- 145 • BLS Team Leadership
- 146 • Critical thinking and medical decision making
- 147 • Functioning independently as a team throughout a BLS incident

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149 **MENTORING GUIDELINES:**

150 BLS Candidates are authorized to begin the process to provide patient care independently at
151 the BLS level **ONLY** under the following circumstances:

- 152 • When under the direct supervision of an approved Department Mentor
- 153 • When ALL BLS activities are documented in accordance with the Provider
154 Development Process (all incidents where any BLS role occurred requires
155 documentation)
- 156 • When the BLS Candidate has his/her BLS Provider Development Manual and
157 authorization in his/her possession
- 158 • Until the specific expiration date



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159 **SHIFT MENTORING AND PARTIAL SHIFTS:**

160 The BLS Candidate will initiate a BLS Candidate Evaluation Form for each call where Mentoring
161 occurred. This shall occur for complete Mentoring shifts or for partial Mentoring shifts. Partial
162 Mentoring shifts might occur when the BLS Candidate is not out of minimum staffing, but finds
163 an opportunity on an incident scene with a Mentor present to perform skills or contribute to
164 BLS patient care. Once the BLS Candidate areas of the form are complete, the BLS Candidate
165 will immediately submit it to the Mentor for that shift. The Mentor will complete his/her areas
166 of the form, rating the shift performance of the BLS Candidate.

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168 **PARTIAL CALL:**

169 Partial Call implies that Mentoring actively occurred during some portion of an EMS incident.
170 The BLS Candidate and Mentor must BOTH be available to provide care as a TEAM during the
171 portion of the incident where the mentored educational experience occurred.

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173 **COMPLETE CALL:**

174 Complete Call implies that Mentoring actively occurred during all of the following phases of an
175 incident. ***Complete Calls must be initiated and completed while assigned to the ambulance.***

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- Response to the call
- Initial scene assessment
- Initial patient assessment
- Treatment plan formulation
- Treatment
- Transport (Mentor MUST be present in patient compartment)
- Transition to hospital staff
- Report and narrative writing
- Equipment readiness

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186 **SUBMISSION FOR INDEPENDENT PATIENT CARE:**

187 • Completion of the process occurs when the BLS Candidate feels they are capable of
188 independently providing patient care at the BLS level, and has satisfied each of the
189 required performance objectives of the process.

190 • The BLS Candidate will complete all the components of the Checklist for Manual
191 Submission.

192 • Once the BLS Candidate has verified that all components are complete and
193 documentation is included, the BLS Candidate will notify their assigned Mentor that
194 they feel they are ready to have their manual evaluated.

195 • The Mentor will review the manual for organization and completeness using the
196 Checklist for Manual Submission. Mentors should return the manual if they deem it
197 to be incomplete, unorganized, or feel the BLS Candidate is not ready to provide
198 patient care independently at the BLS level. Feedback will be provided by the
199 Mentor to the BLS Candidate if this occurs.

200 • If the Mentor, company or training officer judges the manual to be complete, and
201 feels the BLS Candidate is ready to independently provide patient care at the BLS



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- 202 level, he/she will complete their portion of the Checklist for Manual Submission and
203 attach a letter of recommendation to the manual.
- 204 • For career candidates, completed manuals will be forwarded to the Medical Duty
205 Officer for signature and submission to the EMS Training Branch.
 - 206 • For volunteer candidates, completed manuals will be forwarded to their Corporate
207 Volunteer Chief or designee for signature and submission to the EMS Training
208 Branch.
 - 209 • The EMS training branch will review the manual for completeness and place the
210 manual in the provider's training file. If the manual is deemed incomplete, it will be
211 returned to the BLS Candidate for resubmission after being completed.

212 **BLS MENTOR IDENTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATION:**

213 The following criteria will be used to identify and establish qualified candidates to assume the
214 role of BLS Mentors.

- 215 • For career members, each company officer will identify a minimum of two, a primary
216 and a backup, members to be designated as BLS Mentors.
- 217 • For volunteer members, each Corporate Volunteer Chief or designee will identify a
218 minimum of two, a primary and a backup, members to be designated as BLS
219 Mentors.
- 220 • Criteria:
 - 221 ○ 40 documented BLS/ALS calls in which a patient assessment was completed
222 and the patient refused or was transported
 - 223 ○ Not involved in an improvement plan or disciplinary process
 - 224 ○ No documented protocol violations within the last two years
 - 225 ○ Must score 80% or higher on the BLS Mentor evaluation quiz
 - 226 ○ Must be recommended by the Company or Volunteer Training Officer
 - 227 ○ Must be recommended by the Company or Volunteer Training Officer
 - 228 ○ All ALS preceptors automatically meet the requirements to be BLS Mentors

229 **PROCESS TO BECOME A BLS MENTOR:**

- 230 • Any Department operational members, career or volunteer, who meet the
231 qualifications are eligible to enter the process to become a Mentor.
- 232 • For career members, a letter of recommendation must be written from both their
233 Company Officer and EMS officer.
- 234 • For volunteer members, a letter of recommendation must be written from their
235 Volunteer Corporation Chief or designee.
- 236 • Written recommendations shall be submitted to the Bureau of Education and
237 Training EMS Branch. Education and Training will enroll the identified member into
238 the online BLS Mentor presentation located on the Virtual Academy. Upon
239 successful completion of the online presentation, Education and Training will notify
240 the Emergency Services Bureau, or the appropriate Volunteer Corporation Chief, of
241 the member's BLS mentoring status.

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245 **REFERENCES**

246 None

247 **SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES**

248 New policy, FD1379, 6/9/14.

249 **FORMS/ATTACHMENTS**

250 None

251 **APPROVED**

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric A. Proctor".

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Assistant Chief Eric Proctor
Bureau of Education and Training