FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR EMS PERSONNEL
ADVISORY 25-11-01

TO: Massachusetts Certified EMTs and Paramedics (EMS Personnel)
Massachusetts Licensed Ambulance Services
FROM: Susan Lewis, NRP, Director
DATE: November 28, 2025, updated February 12, 2026
RE: Limits on EMS Personnel Functioning as EMTs and Paramedics—Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The purpose of this document is to address EMS personnel's frequently asked questions regarding the Department of Public Health's (Department) Advisory 25-11-01, dated November 18, 2025. The advisory reminded EMS personnel (EMTs, Advanced EMTs, and paramedics) that they may only function as EMTs, Advanced EMTs, or paramedics when they are on duty for a licensed ambulance service, licensed EMS First Responder (EFR) service (at the basic life support level or above only), or a Department-approved mobile integrated health (MIH) or community EMS (CEMS) program.

1. *What is the basis for this advisory? Why is the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) restricting what EMT personnel can do? Where did this rule come from?*

This advisory is summarizing a Massachusetts law regarding the use of emergency medical services titles and services, M.G.L. c. 111C, § 19(a), which states:

> No person shall… provide EMS or hold oneself out as, or use the title of EMS first responder, emergency medical technician, or paramedic or the acronym EMT or any other title or acronym used by the department in the certification of emergency medical services personnel… other than on behalf of an EMS first response service or an ambulance service or other EMS provider duly licensed…

Essentially, the law provides that your EMT or paramedic credentials are only valid when you are working for a licensed ambulance service, licensed EFR service, or Department-approved MIH or CEMS program and while working under the direction of the Affiliate Hospital Medical Director.

2. *When did this law go into effect?*

The law was enacted on March 30, 2000.

3. *Why did the Department send me this advisory now?*

Although this is not a new statutory requirement, recently the Department has received some compliance cases involving health care facilities, sporting events, and EMS personnel working outside of their scope of certification. These cases resulted in sanctions for both the health care facilities and the EMTs and paramedics individually. The Department sent this advisory as a reminder to all level EMTs and paramedics to reduce confusion and to prevent future compliance

issues. Pursuant to the law, violations may be punished by fines, and the Department may report offenses to the Attorney General's Office. In addition, non-compliance could result in action against your EMT or paramedic credentials.

4. *What does it mean to "hold myself out" as an EMT or paramedic?*

"Holding yourself out" as an EMT or paramedic means to represent yourself as having those credentials, certifications, or titles or as having the authority, status, or abilities of an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic at the scene of an emergency or in any setting in which you can be misunderstood as being ready and available to act as an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic. This also includes working in any capacity offering advice, skills, or services that is in the scope of practice as an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic, beyond what persons trained at the first responder level can do. The first responder level is first aid and CPR as those functions are set out in the training requirements for first responders, under 105 CMR 171.000, and Administrative Requirement (AR) 2-100.

5. *Does this advisory mean that I am no longer allowed to use my credentials in an email signature or on my resume? Would this fall into the "holding myself out as an EMT"?*

No. It is acceptable to list your active credentials in an email signature or on a resume. Holding yourself out means using the title of EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic in any setting in which you are appearing to function as an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic.

6. *What does it mean to be working "on behalf of an EMS first response service or an ambulance service or other EMS provider duly licensed"?*

This means that you are employed by, and on duty with, the licensed EMS provider, which is an ambulance service, EFR service, MIH, or CEMS program.

7. *Can I work for an entity that has an ambulance service license and a hospital license as an EMT or paramedic?*

You are able to work for and function as an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic on the roster of an ambulance service for which a hospital holds a license. You cannot function as an EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic for areas of the hospital—such as in an inpatient or emergency department setting—which are not covered by the hospital's ambulance service license. You may work in these other hospital settings in roles that do not have you providing EMT, Advanced EMT, or paramedic functions.

8. *Why can't an EMT or paramedic work in a hospital or clinic setting, if they are supervised and monitored appropriately?*

An EMT or paramedic cannot work in that capacity in a hospital because it is prohibited by M.G.L. c. 111C, § 19(a). A person may not work as an EMT or paramedic or work in a capacity that requires that they use their EMT or paramedic certification, unless they are employed by, and on duty with, a licensed ambulance service, EFR service, MIH, or CEMS program.

However, an individual who is certified as an EMT or paramedic may work in a hospital, or any other setting, in a position that does not require performing the functions of an EMT or paramedic. This means that a person certified as an EMT or paramedic may work in a hospital or clinic in a position that does not require licensure or certification, for example, as a medical assistant or a medical technician.

9. *What about urgent care centers, dentists' offices, mobile health care entities, blood banks, MRI facilities, hospital at home programs, or any other clinic or health care facility?*

The law applies to these facilities in the same manner described for hospitals or clinics above. A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic unless they are employed by, and on duty with, a licensed ambulance service, EFR, MIH, or CEMS program.

10. *Does this mean that an EMT or paramedic can never accept a job in a setting other than an ambulance service, EFR, MIH, or CEMS?*

No, a person holding certification as an EMT or paramedic may work in other jobs or settings, but when doing so, they cannot hold themselves out as EMTs or paramedics nor perform the skills and functions of an EMT or paramedic. EMS personnel must work under their Affiliate Hospital Medical Director at all times.

11. *What do I do if I am currently working in a hospital, urgent care, clinic, or other setting as an EMT or paramedic? Am I protected under the employer if my position requires that I am certified as an EMT or paramedic?*

First, speak with your employer about the requirements of this law and ask your employer to review your title and job description. An employer, other than a licensed ambulance service, EFR service, MIH, or CEMS program, may not utilize the titles "EMT," "Advanced EMT," or "Paramedic," nor can the employer require those certifications as part of a job description under a different title. If you believe that your employer is asking you to do something that would violate the law, you may file a complaint with the Department, which may be anonymous. The Department will investigate complaints and refer to other state or federal entities, where appropriate.

12. *What if I work in a military setting or on a military base?*

If you work for a military organization that is operating a licensed ambulance service under federal authority, then you may operate as an EMT or paramedic. However, if the military organization is not a federally licensed ambulance service, then you may only operate in Massachusetts at the first responder level.

13. *What about working as an EMT or paramedic at sporting events?*

EMTs and paramedics may work at sporting events if they are on duty with and deployed by a licensed ambulance service. The sponsor of the sporting event, e.g., the school, is hiring the

ambulance service to staff the sporting event with an EMT or paramedic. The sponsor/school cannot hire the EMT or paramedic directly or privately.

14. *Can I work as an EMT or paramedic independently or for entities that advertise themselves as event staffing solutions for large events or simply change the name of the position to "event medic" or "athletic trainer?"*

No. The law applies to these employers in the same manner described for hospitals or clinics above. A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic unless they are employed by, and on duty with, a licensed ambulance service, EFR, MIH, or CEMS program. "Holding oneself out" as an EMT or paramedic includes offering advice, skills, or services that only an EMT or paramedic is certified to provide. Changing the name of the position is not enough to avoid the law. In addition, working as an athletic trainer requires its own license and having an EMT certification alone, at any level, does not equate to an athletic trainer license.

15. *Does the ambulance service have to leave an ambulance at the sporting or other event the whole time?*

No, the ambulance service may dispatch an on duty EMT or paramedic, with appropriate equipment to begin assessment at the side of a patient, without an ambulance. If emergency services are needed at the event, the EMT or paramedic would call for the ambulance to respond.

16. *What about working in ski resorts or other first responder agencies that aren't licensed to run an ambulance or EFR service?*

The law applies to these situations. A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic unless they are employed by, and on duty with, a licensed ambulance, or EFR service or Department-approved MIH or CEMS program. You may only operate at the first responder level. The first responder level is first aid and CPR as those functions are set out in the training requirements for first responders, under 105 CMR 171.000, and Administrative Requirement (AR) 2-100.

17. *What about working transporting organs?*

A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic unless they are employed by, and on duty with, a licensed ambulance or EFR service, or Department-approved MIH or CEMS program. If the position for which you are transporting organs does not require certification as an EMT or paramedic, there is nothing in the statute prohibiting an EMT or paramedic from taking the position, as long as you do not perform duties and functions of an EMT or paramedic.

18. *What if I am a police officer who holds a certification as an EMT or paramedic?*

The law applies to this situation. A police officer who is working for a police department that is not licensed as an ambulance or EFR service may only operate at a first responder level.

19. What if I am volunteering as an EMT or paramedic at an event?

The law applies to this situation. A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic, regardless of whether they are receiving compensation, unless they are on duty for a licensed ambulance or EFR service, or Department-approved MIH or CEMS program. You may only operate at the first responder level. The first responder level is first aid and CPR as those functions are set out in the training requirements for first responders, under 105 CMR 171.000, and Administrative Requirement (AR) 2-100.

20. What if I happen to observe an emergency? May I offer my assistance as an EMT or paramedic?

The law applies to this situation. A person may not hold themselves out as an EMT or paramedic, regardless of whether they are receiving compensation, unless they are on duty for a licensed ambulance or EFR service, or Department-approved MIH or CEMS program. You may assist at the first responder level and should contact EMS as soon as practicable. However, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112, § 12V, "any person who, in good faith, attempts to render emergency care including, but not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or defibrillation, and does so without compensation, shall not be liable for acts or omissions, other than gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct, resulting from the attempt to render such emergency care." This statute only protects people acting in their individual capacity from civil liability for negligence. EMTs and paramedics still must follow the requirements of M.G.L. c. 111C and 105 CMR 170.000 to remain in good standing for certification.

21. What does it mean to be "on duty"? For example, if my ambulance service is contracted by a school system to staff interscholastic football games, and they send me on a scheduled day off and pay me overtime, can I work as an EMT or paramedic?

On duty means that your ambulance service has deployed you to work as an EMT or paramedic on its behalf. Regardless of whether you were normally supposed to be off and are paid overtime to work this game, you are now on duty on behalf of the ambulance service and may work as an EMT or paramedic.

22. What if I am off duty and the ambulance service where I work is responding to an emergency nearby, may I assist?

No, because you are not on duty with the licensed ambulance service. However, your ambulance service may have a policy under which you could contact dispatch to be activated as on duty to assist if the dispatched crew on scene needs help.

23. What happens if I violate this statute?

If the Department becomes aware of a potential violation of M.G.L. c. 111C or 105 CMR 170.000, it is required to investigate and take appropriate action, including and up to revocation of an EMT or paramedic's certification. M.G.L. c. 111C, § 19(b) includes possible referral for criminal action, including a penalty of not less than $100 and not more than $1,000 for each

offense, where each day that violation continues is considered a separate offense. Therefore, a person or facility could be subject to fines of up to $1000 a day. In addition, if an EMT or paramedic were providing services in violation of the statute, they would not be protected from personal liability under M.G.L. c. 111C, § 21 and could be subject to a civil lawsuit for monetary damages.

24. Why am I not covered by the "Good Samaritan Law"?

Massachusetts does not have one "Good Samaritan Law" that covers all situations. Instead, there are a variety of laws that provide protection from civil or criminal liability for specific circumstances.[1] Most relevant here is M.G.L. c. 112, § 12V, which states:

> Any person who, in good faith, attempts to render emergency care including, but not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or defibrillation, and does so without compensation, shall not be liable for acts or omissions, other than gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct, resulting from the attempt to render such emergency care.

Note that this statute only protects people who are acting without compensation, meaning that it does not apply when someone is working on duty for any entity as an EMT or paramedic. In addition, this statute only protects people acting in their individual capacity from civil liability for negligence. EMTs and paramedics still must follow the requirements of M.G.L. c. 111C and 105 CMR 170.000 to remain in good standing for certification.

25. Will the Department issue me a waiver?

No, the Department is required to follow the law. The Department has no authority to waive a statute enacted by the Legislature. Only the Legislature can amend or change a statute.

26. If I received this advisory, does it mean that I need to identify that I have a compliance history with the Department on my application for EMT renewal?

No, the Department is intentionally increasing communication and transparency with EMS personnel to ensure that all certified personnel have the most accurate information. This advisory is not a compliance action against you.

27. My question wasn't answered. Can the Department advise me on my particular situation or employment?

As employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department staff cannot give you legal advice, nor advise you on your particular factual situation. In addition, once the Department becomes aware of a potential violation of M.G.L. c. 111C or 105 CMR 170.000, it is required to investigate and take appropriate action.

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[1] For example, M.G.L. c. 258C, § 13 applies to assisting victims of crimes, M.G.L. c. 94C, § 19B applies to use of an opioid antagonist on someone experiencing an overdose, and M.G.L. c. 94C, § 34A applies to seeking medical attention for a drug-related overdose.