



RC 2002- 057

DATE: December 23, 2002

SUBJECT: Continuing Education Requirements for ALS Medical Command Authorization

TO: Regional EMS Council Directors

FROM: Margaret E. Trimble, Director
Emergency Medical Services Office

Each year the EMS Office receives a number of telephone calls to clarify issues related to completion of continuing education requirements by advanced life support (ALS) providers. Since many of these questions are asked repeatedly, you are encouraged to distribute this reminder memo to all ALS ambulance services, ALS service medical directors and medical command facilities with the goal of preventing problems that often result from inadequate planning and a failure to meet requirements.

The EMS regulations require completion of 18 credits of continuing education each calendar year (January – December). The 18 credits are a requirement for those ALS providers who choose to apply for and maintain medical command authorization. An adjustment to the above requirement is permissible based upon the provider's certification date. For example, someone receiving certification in June would be required to achieve nine (9) hours of continuing education to be eligible to receive medical command authorization for the following year.

The EMS regulations **require** the ALS service medical director to deny medical command authorization if continuing education requirements are not satisfied in accordance with 28 Pa. Code § 1003 (b)(2). The ALS service medical director is not empowered to waive these requirements. If the ALS service medical director or the practitioner believes that circumstances exist which justify a waiver, an application for an exception to the requirements may be filed consistent with 28 Pa Code § 1001.4. The attached information is provided to clarify how an ALS practitioner's failure to meet continuing education requirements for medical command authorization is to be handled.

In consideration of ALS service medical directors who are responsible for many ALS providers and who, therefore, experience an excessive workload at the end of the calendar year in completing an annual review of all providers by December 31, the Department will permit the ALS service medical director additional time to review the practitioners' records. The additional time permitted is 30 days from December 31. Therefore, completion of all medical command authorization application materials must be completed by January 30 of the new calendar year.

Medical command authorization or denial must be evaluated using the calendar year (January 1-December 31) regardless of the review time extension given to the ALS service medical director. This memo is not to be construed, nor does it imply, that the ALS provider is not personally accountable for meeting the required credit hours.

I hope this memo serves to clarify how the failure to satisfy continuing education requirements for medical command authorization is to be addressed and provides direction for the councils to disseminate to ALS service medical directors, ALS personnel and medical command facilities.