

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE**BUYING AND CONSUMPTION OF MEALS FOR EMS CREW****SCDF-EMS-SOP-021****1. AIM**

This SOP spells out the guidelines on the conditions and procedures to be observed when buying and consuming meals in/out of hospital and base i.e., Fire Station, Fire Post or Dynamic Deployment Base (DDB).

2. BUYING OF MEALS

- 2.1 Due to the nature of EMS calls which are typically unpredictable, it would not be possible to have a fixed mealtime for the EMS crew. Hence, the crew may be allowed to purchase meals with the approval from Operations Centre (Ops Centre) after the completion of their ambulance call.
- 2.2 The EMS crew are encouraged to buy meals at the hospital. However, the crew may be allowed to buy meals outside hospital under the following conditions:
 - 2.2.1 Hospital canteens/food courts are full of patrons and queues are long and buying of meals may take a long time which may result in overstaying at hospitals.
 - 2.2.2 When hospital canteens/food courts at hospitals are closed which may be a common sight during school holidays.
 - 2.2.3 In the evenings or early morning when the hospital canteens/food courts are not opened for business or are closed for renovation.
- 2.3 EMS crew are allowed to buy meals in the same seating (i.e., together) **twice per shift**, whether in or out of hospital. The ambulance **should not be off-run** when buying meals.
- 2.4 The EMS crew should carry themselves well and shall not undertake actions that will bring disrepute to SCDF when they are buying meals in public.
- 2.5 Procedures governing EMS crew in buying meals within hospital:
 - 2.5.1 The paramedic who is the crew leader for the ambulance is responsible to inform the Ops Centre of the intention to buy meals at the hospital. Approval must be provided by Ops Centre before the crew make the purchase.

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

- 2.5.2 The EMS crew should be in their working attire (i.e., uniform) when buying meals and the crew is given **up to 15 minutes** to complete the purchase.
 - 2.5.3 Ops Centre may deny the request to buy meals if there are emergencies with no nearest or available ambulance. Under such circumstances, the ambulance crew may be despatched and shall proceed for the call as instructed.
 - 2.5.4 Ops Centre may deny request from the EMS crew to buy meals if a few ambulances make similar request at the same time and there is insufficient coverage (i.e., shortage of ambulances) for EMS calls.
 - 2.5.5 The paramedic in charge is required to update and seek approval from Ops Centre if the EMS crew requires more than 15 minutes to purchase their meals.
- 2.6 Procedures governing EMS crew in buying meals outside hospital:
- 2.6.1 The EMS crew are allowed to buy meals outside the hospital **along the route** taken when returning to base. There should not be attempts to detour from the returning route to purchase meals as this can potentially lead to longer response time if despatched for an emergency case.
 - 2.6.2 When arriving at the stall/eatery, the ambulance must park at a designated parking lot nearest to the stall/eatery and comply with all the traffic and parking regulations.
 - 2.6.3 The Paramedic, who is the crew leader, is to inform Ops Centre of the intention to buy meals and the location where they will be buying from before making the stop to purchase the meals. Similarly, the ambulance should not be off-run to purchase meals.
 - 2.6.4 If there is an emergency call and the ambulance is nearest to the incident location, Ops Centre may deny the request for the ambulance to make the stop to buy meals. The ambulance may also be despatched for the case. In such a circumstance, the EMS crew may purchase their meals upon returning from the ambulance call.
 - 2.6.5 All sirens, blinkers, hazard, and beacon lights are to be turned off when stopping by public area to purchase food. Stopping and parking at non-designated areas are not allowed; EMS crew is to comply strictly to the traffic requirements.

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

- 2.6.6 When purchasing meals outside hospital, only **one person** is allowed to alight and buy meals for the crew. The Paramedic must remain in the ambulance and to manage the comms sets in case there is an incoming ambulance call from Ops Centre. The person who will be purchasing the meals must be in the working attire (i.e., EMS uniform).
- 2.6.7 The EMS crew is highly discouraged to buy meals from stalls or eateries that have a long queue or food that takes a long time to prepare as it would affect operational turnaround or response time. Similarly, the EMS crew is given up to 15 minutes to purchase the meals however, the ambulance should not be off-run.
- 2.6.8 Ops Centre may deny the request from the ambulance crew to purchase meals if a few ambulances make similar request at the same time and there are insufficient ambulances for coverage.
- 2.6.9 The EMS crew is not allowed to make more than one stop to purchase meals (i.e., purchase from different locations). If there is an ambulance call while purchasing meals or waiting for the food, the crew may decide to cancel the food order or to collect later upon returning from the ambulance call. The EMS crew should not delay responding to the incident upon despatched by Ops Centre.
- 2.6.10 If the EMS crew had cancelled their food order earlier due to proceeding for an ambulance call, they may inform Ops Centre to purchase their meals upon the completion of their ambulance call.
- 2.7 EMS crew from selected Fire Stations (i.e., Sentosa, Tuas and Tuas View) are allowed to purchase meals using the ambulance at non-call hours. Prior to leaving the base to purchase their food, the EMS crew is required to obtain approval from Ops Centre. The EMS crew should travel to the nearest available food centre to purchase the food and similarly, no off-running of ambulances is permitted. The EMS crew is given up to 15 minutes to purchase their meals before they return to base for standby.
- 2.8 Marina Bay Fire Station is allowed to purchase meals using the ambulance only on ad-hoc basis (e.g., during weekends, non-call hours, no fire crew to assist in buying food, or when all other means to purchase meals have been exhausted). Approval from Commander Fire Station (CFS) must be first obtained before informing Ops Centre on the intent to purchase meals. The EMS crew should travel to the nearest available food centre to purchase the food and similarly, no off-running of ambulances is permitted. The EMS crew is given up to 15 minutes to purchase their meals before they return to base for standby.

3. CONSUMPTION OF MEALS

SCDF-EMS-SOP-021

Release: 6/2023

BUYING AND CONSUMPTION OF FOOD FOR AMBULANCE CREW

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

- 3.1 There are many windows of opportunities for EMS crew to consume their meals. Crew may consider having meals in-between calls, or whenever possible. However, for cases where the crew may not have the opportunity to consume their meals, the crew may explore and tap on these guidelines when on-duty:
 - 3.1.1 If the EMS crew had previously purchased their meals from previous call or have home-packed meals with them, and is proceeded for another call:
 - 3.1.1.1 Upon reaching hospital when conveying a patient, the Paramedic may request Ops Centre to off-run the ambulance for up to 30 minutes to consume their meals in the hospital canteen or food court. EMS crew is to refrain from having meals in the ambulance due for consideration of hygiene and possible discomfort.
 - 3.1.1.2 If the ambulance did not convey a patient to hospital and have reached the standby location/base, the Paramedic may request through Ops Centre to off-run the ambulance up to 30 minutes to consume their meals at standby location/base.
- 3.2 Off-run for meal consumption shall be staggered and **is subjected to Ops Centre's approval** in consideration of the available EMS resources to respond to peacetime calls:
 - 3.3.1 Ops Centre shall monitor the number of ambulances requesting off-run for meal consumption. Ops Centre may deny the request to off-run if multiple ambulances make the same request concurrently while the available EMS resources are low/insufficient.
 - 3.3.2 In such circumstances stated in para 3.3.1, the EMS crew may be asked to take on a slightly later meal consumption slot, based on call load and available EMS resources at that moment.
 - 3.3.3 As Ops Centre has overview on the islandwide available peacetime EMS resources at every point, hence, EMS crew is to respect and comply with Ops Centre's decision where off-run for meal consumption is concerned.
- 3.3 In a situation when the EMS crew will be consuming meals in the hospital, similar to contents captured in para 3, the EMS crew is required to seek approval

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

from Ops Centre before off-running to consume meals. The following guidelines applies when having meals in hospital:

- 3.3.1 EMS Crew is to ensure the ambulance engine is switched off when parked at the ambulance bay. The crew must be in full uniform, seated together when having meals at the hospital canteen or food court.
- 3.3.2 EMS crew should always carry themselves respectfully and not cause any disturbance to the members of public. They should not be seen behaving inappropriately such as talking loudly, shouting and/or creating excessive noise.
- 3.3.3 On completion of the meal and/or up to 30 minutes, the EMS crew is to ensure proper disposal of food containers/packets. The crew should update Ops Centre immediately when they are ready to be on the run.
- 3.4 In the situation where the EMS crew will be consuming their meals at base, similar to contents captured in para 3, Ops Centre approval needs to be obtained before the crew off-run the ambulance to consume the meals. The following guidelines applies when EMS crew off-run to consume meals at standby location/base:
 - 3.4.1 On completion of the meals and/or 30 minutes, the EMS crew is to update Ops Centre when they are ready to be on the run to take EMS calls.
- 3.5 An EMS ambulance (i.e., per call-sign) is permitted to off-run in separate time blocks, **twice** per shift. The EMS crew are not allowed to combine the 30 minutes off-run (i.e., there should not be 1 hour off-run per shift for meals consumption). The crew are encouraged to consume their meals (e.g., breakfast/lunch/dinner) hence they are not permitted to combine the off-run for meals consumption to 1 hour. The EMS Crew is encouraged to consume their meals at the same time as each call-sign is permitted to off-run maximum twice per shift for meals consumption.
- 3.6 Food consumption in ambulance is strictly prohibited to maintain hygiene and cleanliness.

4. EFFECTIVE DATE

SCDF-EMS-SOP-021

Release: 6/2023

BUYING AND CONSUMPTION OF FOOD FOR AMBULANCE CREW

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

- 4.1 This release of the SOP supersedes EMS-SOP-021 Release 05/2023 and shall take effect immediately and shall remain in force unless amended and/or revoked by Director, EMS Department, HQ SCDF.
- 4.2 Any clarifications pertaining to this SOP shall be directed to SAD EMS Readiness EMS Department, HQ SCDF.