



*Continually improving the care delivered to EMS patients by discovering, developing, and promoting the best EMS management practices.*

## POSITION STATEMENT

### Educational Preparation for EMS Leaders

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) systems are complex healthcare delivery systems that deploy vehicles, equipment and personnel in order to provide healthcare services throughout the community and sophisticated clinical care at the patient's side. In order to be effective, future leaders of EMS systems must be well-versed in healthcare delivery, general management principles as well as an array of specialty areas that relate to the operation, administration and logistics of EMS systems. This body of knowledge is extensive and clearly establishes EMS as its own profession. We recognize that many current EMS leaders have achieved success through a combination of formal education, training, and experience. The National EMS Management Association recognizes the importance of training and experience, however the ever-increasing complexity of EMS systems necessitates recognizing the increasing importance of formal education to the success of EMS leaders. Therefore formal education requirements for EMS leadership positions should be encouraged. In particular, post-secondary education that builds specialized knowledge, intellectual discipline and a broader world view that will be essential to the advancement of the EMS profession. In particular, NEMSMA recommends the following educational requirements be adopted by EMS organizations nationwide for EMS professionals:

Supervising EMS Officers should be required to possess an associates (2 year) degree or equivalent with a focus on clinical emergency care.

Managing EMS Officers should be required to possess a bachelors (4 year) degree. Although degrees in particular fields, or coursework in EMS itself, may be particularly well suited to EMS leadership positions, NEMSMA believes a four-year degree in any field will better prepare our future leaders.

Executive EMS Officers should be required to hold a postgraduate (masters, doctoral or professional) degree in an appropriate field. Achievement of this level of education reflects substantial dedication to rigorous analysis and the application of knowledge to complex issues. This is a skill set that will be essential to the ongoing improvement of the practice of EMS.

In lieu of, or in addition to, postgraduate preparation NEMSMA further recommends EMS organizations consider the value of professional certifications such as the Center for Public Safety Excellence – Chief EMS Officer credential, the EMS programs of the National Fire Academy or the Fitch and Associates Ambulance Service Manager Program as requirements for individuals in senior leadership positions.

NEMSMA also recognizes the leadership physicians provide to EMS systems and further understands that some EMS systems may find it appropriate to have physicians serve as executive, or chief executive EMS officers. However, educational and experience as a physician is not in and of itself sufficient preparation to lead a modern

EMS organization and NEMSMA recommends physician leaders be held to the same standards noted above.

NEMSMA does not believe that these suggested requirements be used in any way to displace current EMS practitioners. By contrast, we believe that despite their own level of formal education, current EMS providers should embrace and advocate for the implementation of formal educational requirements as a mechanism to ensure the continued advancement and improvement of our profession for generations to come.

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