New York State
Department of Health
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services

POLICY STATEMENT

Supersedes/Updates: 00-14

No. 09-12

Date: December 28, 2009

Re: Storage and Integrity of Prehospital Medications and Intravenous fluids

Purpose

Due to the unique nature of the prehospital environment, medications and intravenous fluids that are stored and used in the prehospital setting are subjected to extreme environmental changes. This may have a negative impact on the stability, strength, quality and purity of these medications. As a result, medications may become less effective or may negatively impact the patients. Programs should be implemented with regards to how medications and intravenous solutions are stored in the EMS stations and vehicles. This policy applies to all BLS and ALS agencies that carry medications and/or intravenous fluids.

Policy

In an effort to assist agencies in maintaining the integrity of prehospital medications and intravenous fluids, the following should be the **minimum** requirements implemented by each service authorized to carry prehospital medications and intravenous fluids.

- All EMS services authorized by the Regional Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (REMAC) to carry medications and intravenous fluids must develop policies to define the appropriate storage and maintenance of all medications and intravenous fluids. These policies should also be incorporated in to the agency's policies and procedures as well as the QI program.

- All medications and intravenous fluids must be stored in an environment that protects them from extreme temperature changes and light according to each medication manufacturer's guidelines. This includes all vehicles, stationary cabinets or any other storage facilities where medications and intravenous fluids are stored. According to manufacturer's guidelines, most medications must be stored at temperatures that range from 59 degrees to 77 degrees Fahrenheit[1]. However, the temperature ranges may differ for many medications.

- Agencies must have policies related to the recognition, destruction and replacement of medication that have been exposed to conditions outside or have surpassed the printed expiration date as required by the manufacture's guidelines.

- Agencies must routinely monitor and record the temperatures for all locations where medications and intravenous solutions are stored.

[1] New Jersey – Drug Adulteration Study, October, 1995