



Who Needs To See This Bulletin?

Please ensure that this bulletin is circulated to ALL STAFF.

Please print out copies of this bulletin for distribution around your establishment. You may also wish to distribute it to Managers at your morning meeting.

Quick-Time Learning Bulletin Responding to Medical Emergencies

Since 2004, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) has made approximately 600 recommendations relating to medical emergency response. 250 of these recommendations directly relate to how the emergency was called over the prison's network radio system, medical emergency response codes, how or when the ambulance was called and delays in allowing the ambulance access to the prison.

A Prison Service Instruction is being drafted as part of the NOMS response to these recommendations. However, this QTLB provides immediate guidance for calling a medical emergency over the network radio system and for requesting ambulances in all public and private prisons and NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres.

KEY LEARNING POINTS:

- Failure to learn from the PPO investigations could result in prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 or Crown Censure by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- On 17 February 2011 Michael Spurr and Richard Bradshaw jointly wrote to all Governors and Directors about emergency ambulance procedures. This letter stated *"It is essential that internal procedures should not waste undue time in summoning emergency assistance. It should not, for example, be a requirement in every case for a member of the prison healthcare team to attend the scene before emergency services are called."*
- It is essential that an ambulance is called in all cases where there are serious concerns about the immediate health of a prisoner and that access to both the prison and the individual prisoner is not delayed.
- Unnecessary delays in escorting ambulance staff to the patient and discharging the ambulance from the prison (with or without the patient) must be avoided.
- Local procedures, including medical emergency response codes, should ensure that duty healthcare staff are informed of the circumstances surrounding the nature of the emergency, so that they may attend the scene with the correct equipment.

PROMPTS FOR ACTIONS

- How do staff in your prison communicate a medical emergency to the appropriate departments?
- Do your local procedures ensure that staff arriving at the scene know what to expect and can therefore bring the correct emergency equipment?
- Do your local procedures allow for any member of staff who is first on scene to request an ambulance before the Orderly Officer, Duty Manager or healthcare staff arrive?
- Do all staff understand that it is their responsibility to request an ambulance if they find a prisoner in a life threatening situation?
- Are your medical emergency response procedures unnecessarily lengthy and / or contribute to delays in calling ambulances?
- Are you confident that ambulances and paramedics are escorted to and from the scene in a timely manner?

Contacts points at OSRRG

Ron Elder 0300 047 5730 ron.elder@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Tom Wilson 0300 047 5713 thomas.wilson02@noms.gsi.gov.uk

Jon Vellacott 0300 047 5712 jon.vellacott@noms.gsi.gov.uk