



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO BOX 360
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0360

MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

www.nj.gov/health

DR. RAYNARD E. WASHINGTON
Commissioner

August 20, 2026

Dulce Soriano Arellano



**Re: Notice of Summary Suspension of EMT Certification
EMS ID # 657751
Investigation Control # 26-0423**

Dear Ms. Soriano Arellano:

The New Jersey Department of Health (Department) is vested with the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Health Care Facilities Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 26:2H-1 et seq., which was enacted, in part, to ensure that all hospital and related health care services rendered in the State of New Jersey are of the highest quality. As defined at N.J.S.A. 26:2H-2(b), health care services include any pre-hospital care rendered by Basic Life Support (BLS). In addition, the Emergency Medical Services Act, N.J.S.A. 26:2K-7 to 69, authorizes the Department to certify Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). In furtherance of the aforementioned statutory objectives, the Department has adopted rules that govern the training, certification, licensure, and professional conduct of EMTs. See N.J.A.C. 8:40 and 8:40A.

On May 28, 2026, the Department's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) received notification that you may have consumed alcohol while working as an EMT for Life Ride. Consistent with OEMS regulatory authority and policy, the OEMS opened an investigation in response to this notification.

Upon opening the investigation, the OEMS investigator confirmed that you are currently certified by the OEMS as an EMT and have been certified as an EMT since August 20, 2024. To date, the OEMS investigators have reviewed and analyzed the following materials related to the incident that occurred:

1. Witness accounts;
2. Members of leadership at Life Ride; and
3. Your testimony during an interview.

Based on the Department's investigation to date, the Department's investigators have determined that on May 28, 2026, you and your partner stopped for lunch at Buffalo Wild Wings in Rockaway, New Jersey. During your interview with OEMS investigators, you reported that upon entering the establishment, your partner began walking to the bar to be seated. You

reported doing the same and joining your partner, who is an Emergency Medical Responder, because you felt pressured to do so. While having lunch, you admitted to consuming one mixed alcoholic drink and reported your partner had a beer.

Per an eyewitness account, you and your partner were observed seated at the bar while in uniform, which prominently displayed a patch identifying you as a New Jersey certified EMT. The witness reported observing several shot glasses in front of both of you, in addition to what you reported as one mixed alcoholic beverage. At that point, your employer was notified of your alcohol consumption and subsequently contacted you, directing you and your partner to return to your work location. Upon your arrival, you were questioned by leadership regarding the incident, during which you acknowledged that you were consuming alcohol while working in the capacity of an EMT.

As you are aware, EMTs must make important medical assessments and carry out appropriate medical interventions in difficult field locations for patients, young and old, combative and docile. In order to effectively care for all patients, EMTs must exercise good judgment and treat patients with dignity and respect. They are entrusted by the public to be there in times of need. Thus, EMTs must trust each other and be trusted by police officers, firefighters, doctors, and other professionals. In short, EMTs must be law-abiding and must be trusted to care for all patients in an appropriate, safe manner and accurately depict all interactions with patients they contact. EMTs are required to operate equipment and vehicles and to administer emergency and potentially life-saving care, all of which cannot be effectively, reliably and harmlessly performed while under the influence of alcohol. Indeed, having an EMT staff or operate a BLS unit after consuming or while under the influence of alcohol places patients who will receive care from the EMT as well as the general public at risk of harm. Accordingly, OEMS rules strictly prohibit EMTs from consuming alcohol while on duty and from being under the influence of alcohol while on duty. Specifically, N.J.A.C. 8:40-4.4(d)(1) provides that “no person shall staff or operate, or be allowed to staff or operate, an MAV or BLS ambulance; after consuming or while under the influence of alcohol, narcotics or any substance that substantially compromises a person's decision-making abilities.”

Based upon the foregoing, the Department has determined that your EMT certification must be **summarily suspended**. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2, “[t]he Commissioner, or his or her designee, may summarily suspend a person’s EMT-Basic and/or EMT-Instructor certification when, in his or her opinion, the continued certification of that person poses an immediate or serious threat to the public health, safety or welfare.” The above actions demonstrate that you not only have poor judgment and a lack of trustworthiness but that you pose a threat to vulnerable patients. These behaviors and actions are incompatible with the duties of an EMT, and the Department finds that your continued certification as an EMT constitutes an immediate and serious threat to public health, safety, and welfare. **Therefore, your certification as an EMT is immediately suspended. You may not, under any circumstances, act in the capacity of, or perform the duties of, an EMT in New Jersey during this period of suspension.**

In the interim, the OEMS will continue to investigate this matter. After the OEMS completes its investigation, you will be advised of what action, if any, the OEMS will take with respect to your EMT certification

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.3, you may appeal to the Commissioner of the Department of Health for emergency relief to contest this summary suspension. Your request for a hearing on this matter must be submitted in writing and must be accompanied by a response to the charges contained herein. Please include the control number **26-0423** on your correspondence, and forward your request to:

New Jersey Department of Health
Office of Legal & Regulatory Compliance
P.O. Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360

Failure to submit a written request for emergency relief within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of this Notice shall be interpreted as an acceptance of this Department's decision to summarily suspend your EMT status pending completion of its investigation, thereby forfeiting all rights to emergency relief. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Zachary Raab at (609) 633-7777 or at Zachary.Raab@doh.nj.gov.

Sincerely,



Candace Gardner, Paramedic
Director
Office of Emergency Medical Services

c: Daniel Kazar, Deputy Director of Operations, OEMS
Zachary Raab, Supervisor of Investigations, OEMS
Thomas Livecchi, Regulatory Officer, OEMS
Christian Rios, Investigator, OEMS
Gabrielle Moitinho, Agency Licensing Regional Coordinator, OEMS
NREMT
File

SENT VIA REGULAR U.S. MAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL # [REDACTED]
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED