

# **NEW JERSEY EMS TASK FORCE**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What is the New Jersey EMS Task Force?**

The New Jersey EMS Task Force is an official, coordinated mobilization of statewide EMS agencies, assets, and mobile healthcare clinicians by the New Jersey Department of Health in response to a large-scale pre-planned event or disaster.

### **2. When is the New Jersey EMS Task Force activated?**

The New Jersey EMS Task Force may be activated when all of the following conditions have been met:

- the Governor has declared a state of emergency; and
- the State Emergency Operations Center – Emergency Support Function 8 desk is activated; and
- an official request for activation has been made by the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner of the Public Health Services Branch, or the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Public Health Infrastructure, Laboratories, and Emergency Preparedness.

Individual or specific components of the New Jersey EMS Task Force may be separately activated upon request for large-scale pre-planned events or local emergencies, requiring additional EMS support that county and local mutual aid agreements cannot sufficiently handle.

All requests for New Jersey EMS Task Force activation, in whole or in part, must be made through the New Jersey State Police's emergency management platform, E-TEAM, to the New Jersey Department of Health.

### **3. How is the New Jersey EMS Task Force coordinated?**

The New Jersey Department of Health has an assigned EMS Task Force Chief within the Office of Emergency Medical Services who directly reports to the State EMS Director and the Emergency Support Function 8 Representative within the State Emergency Operations Center. The New Jersey EMS Task Force Chief is a full-time New Jersey Department of Health employee and is responsible for coordinating all New Jersey EMS Task Force activities regardless of activation.

In addition, the New Jersey EMS Task Force Chief relies on individual County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) EMS Coordinators to assist with and facilitate the mobilization of EMS agencies whenever activated. Their involvement is critical to ensuring that communities maintain EMS coverage despite participating in a New Jersey EMS Task Force assignment outside of their jurisdiction.

### **4. Who are the members of the New Jersey EMS Task Force?**

All career and volunteer EMS agencies in the State of New Jersey are eligible to be called upon by the Department of Health during an activation of the New Jersey EMS Task Force. In addition, the Department of Health maintains a database of EMS agencies that own and operate specialized, technical, and otherwise unique vehicles and equipment that can be called upon and mobilized individually.

Individual agencies, in consultation with their county OEM EMS Coordinators, can accept or deny a request from the Department of Health to mobilize for a New Jersey EMS Task Force assignment based on their agencies' availability and/or response capabilities.

There is no requirement that any EMS agency or licensed mobile healthcare clinician (EMT or paramedic) participate in the New Jersey EMS Task Force. All participation is completely voluntary.

## **5. Who owns the New Jersey EMS Task Force equipment and vehicles?**

County and local Offices of Emergency Management, public and private EMS agencies, and certain hospitals own, operate, and maintain specialized mobile healthcare equipment and vehicles that can be used during a New Jersey EMS Task Force activation. It is the responsibility of the individual entities to maintain their specialized equipment and vehicles in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations, and laws to ensure readiness for activation and deployment.

The New Jersey Department of Health does not own or operate any New Jersey EMS Task Force equipment or vehicles.

## **6. How is the New Jersey EMS Task Force funded?**

The New Jersey Department of Health does not currently provide any direct funding for the New Jersey EMS Task Force. However, every year, stakeholders throughout New Jersey are eligible to apply for and receive competitive grants made available by various state and federal agencies. Historically, grant monies to purchase specialized equipment and vehicles have come through federal grants administered by the New Jersey Office of Homeland and Security, including the Urban Areas Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program.

In addition, funding is made available through the Hospital Preparedness Program which is administered by the New Jersey Department of Health; however, this funding is specifically intended for hospital preparedness and funding is coordinated through the Healthcare and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Advisory Panel. Only a portion of Hospital Preparedness Program grant funds can be used to enhance EMS preparedness and no funds are specifically earmarked for the New Jersey EMS Task Force.

## **7. Is there an Advisory Council for the New Jersey EMS Task Force?**

Yes. Executive Order 19-003 establishes that the Healthcare and Public Health Emergency Coalition Advisory Panel serves as the Advisory Panel for the New Jersey EMS Task Force. A copy

of that Executive Order can be found attached to this document (if printed) or by following this link (if electronic).

**8. How do I become a member of the New Jersey EMS Task Force?**

The New Jersey EMS Task Force does not currently have an individual, standalone membership status for individuals or agencies. However; all licensed mobile healthcare clinicians, including EMTs, paramedics, emergency physicians, and emergency dispatchers may be called upon to participate in a statewide activation of the New Jersey EMS Task Force.

If you are interested in participating in activities related to the New Jersey EMS Task Force, we encourage you to volunteer, or otherwise pursue employment with, EMS agencies, hospitals, and county and local Offices of Emergency Management who own, operate, and maintain specialized equipment and vehicles.

**9. How do I request a specialized EMS vehicle from the New Jersey EMS Task Force, such as a Medical Ambulance Bus or Mass Care Response Unit?**

All specialized EMS vehicles, including Medical Ambulance Buses and Mass Care Response Units are owned and operated by individual EMS agencies, fire departments, hospitals, and local and county Offices of Emergency Management. If you are a public safety agency and need a specialized EMS vehicle for an emergency incident response, you must contact your dispatch center and specifically request the specialized EMS vehicles. Contact your County EMS Coordinator for more information about how to properly communicate these types of requests in your jurisdiction.

The New Jersey Department of Health promotes and encourages the immediate and direct deployment of specialized EMS equipment and vehicles to pre-planned events and mass-casualty incidents; more so, the Department relies on County EMS Coordinators to provide operational coordination and oversight when specialized EMS equipment and vehicles are mobilized.

#### **10. What if I have more questions or concerns?**

Additional questions may be directed to the New Jersey Department of Health at [NJEMSTF@doh.nj.gov](mailto:NJEMSTF@doh.nj.gov).