



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

PO BOX 360

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0360

[www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health)

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
Lt. Governor

KAITLAN BASTON, MD, MSc, DFASAM  
Acting Commissioner

August 10, 2023

Mr. Ronnie Gonzalez

**Re: Notice of Proposed Suspension and Probation  
EMS ID # 504322  
Investigation Control # 22-0143**

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

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 to -27, 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) personnel. 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 objectives set forth in the statutes, the Department has adopted regulations that govern the training, certification, and professional conduct of EMTs and EMT candidates. (See N.J.A.C. 8:40A-1.1 et seq.)

On March 23, 2022, the Department's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) received notification that you may have committed a crime. 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. Specifically, you were certified from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2013, and then regained certification on August 21, 2018. Further, the investigator confirmed that you were charged under Complaint No. W 2022 000492 in East Orange City, New Jersey, with the following:

1. Harassment in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:33-4(a); and
2. Aggravated Assault in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1(b)(3)

Specifically, it was alleged that on February 25, 2022, while you were working as an EMT, you backed a co-worker into a corner, pointed your finger in her face, and said “I’ll slap the sh\*t out of you little girl”. When your co-worker attempted to remove herself from the office, you kicked a chair at her, which struck her legs. As a result, law enforcement was called, and the responding law enforcement officer reported visible bruising to your co-worker’s right leg and to the left of her knee.

Upon learning of the charges, OEMS investigators obtained video surveillance on April 4, 2022, that captured the altercation you had with your co-worker. At this point in the investigation, the OEMS determined that you were an immediate and serious risk to public health, safety, and welfare. Consequently, the OEMS summarily suspended your EMT certification on June 21, 2022. You appealed the summary suspension, which remains pending in the Office of Administrative Law. Because your appeal is pending a hearing, you remain under a summary suspension. See N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2 and 10.3.

After summarily suspending your EMT certification, the OEMS monitored the progression of your criminal case but stayed its investigation into your conduct while your criminal charges were processing through the court. On March 24, 2023, you notified an OEMS investigator, via email, that the charges brought against you were dismissed. OEMS then verified the dismissal of the charges lodged against you.

After learning that your criminal matter was resolved, OEMS resumed its investigation by interviewing you, the complainant, and a witness to the event in question. Specifically, on June 2, 2023, OEMS investigators interviewed you. During your interview, you admitted to putting your finger in the complainant’s face, entering the individual’s personal space, and threatening the complainant by saying “I’m going to slap you.” You also admitted to kicking a chair in the direction of the complainant, which ultimately struck the complainant’s right leg, causing injury. You further admitted that your behavior was all in response to a verbal altercation with the complainant, which angered you. Furthermore, you admitted in your interview that your response to the situation was inappropriate. You also admitted your reaction was an inappropriate response to have towards a co-worker while on duty as an EMT.

The interviews of the witness and complainant were vastly similar to your interview. Regarding the witness, he told OEMS investigators that he saw you engage in a verbal altercation with the complainant and that you proceeded to get within one foot of the complainant’s face. The witness then said that you kicked a chair at the complainant in anger and that the witness had to hold you back. The witness also stated that this is not the first verbal altercation you have had with a co-worker.

As for the complainant, she told the investigators that you were engaged in a verbal altercation with her when you walked toward her, threatened to slap her, and then kicked a chair toward her, which hit her in the leg.

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 and co-workers with dignity and respect. Striking a co-worker with an object out of anger is never an appropriate response to a situation and such behavior undoubtedly demonstrates a threat to the public's safety, health, and welfare. Additionally, making verbal threats against any person while acting in the capacity of an EMT is a prohibited act under N.J.A.C. 10.2(b)(20).

N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2(b) provides that, "[t]he Commissioner, or his or her designee, may issue a formal written warning, impose a monetary penalty, place on probation, suspend, revoke and/or refuse to issue or renew the certification of any EMT or EMT-Instructor for violation of any of the rules set forth in this chapter. This includes, but is not limited to:

20. Making verbal and/or physical threats against any person while acting in the capacity of an EMT-Basic;
24. Any other action deemed by the Department to pose a threat to the public health, safety, or welfare."

When also considering your past criminal conviction arising again from an incident where you displayed violent propensities, your actions described above demonstrate that you not only have poor judgment and a lack of trustworthiness but that you pose a threat to the public's health, safety, and welfare. Indeed, threatening a co-worker with violence and acting out against a co-worker in a fit of anger will not be tolerated by OEMS as such behavior places into question your ability to work collaboratively with fellow emergency medical service providers and deliver effective care to all patients, including those that are combative or experiencing an altered mental state. Moreover, the Department cannot and should not wait until your aggression escalates to the point of you physically or verbally abusing a patient or another professional to take preventative and remedial action against you as the Department's main objective is to prevent such actions from occurring in the first instance. Based upon the foregoing, the Department has determined that your EMT certification should be **suspended for a period of twelve (12) months and thereafter placed on probation for a period of 180 days**.

To date, your EMT certification has been summarily suspended for a period greater than twelve months. As such, OEMS will not require you to serve an additional year of suspension. However, for record purposes, the one-year suspension will be recorded in your file maintained by OEMS. Accordingly, OEMS is lifting your summary suspension as of the date of this notice, but you are placed on probation, as outlined below. Under N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2(e), "[a]n EMT who has been placed on probation may be monitored for performance by the Department" and the Department may "restrict or otherwise limit the scope of practice of the probationer." Consistent with N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.2, the terms of your probation are as follows:

1. At your expense, you must complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours in an anger management course.
  - a. The anger management course must be approved by the Department prior to commencement.
  - b. The course information, including but not limited to, a course outline, course syllabus, and course schedule must be sent electronically to Daniel Kazar at [Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov) no more than thirty (30) calendar days from the issuance of this letter;
  - c. The Department will determine the approval status of the course within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of submission. You will be notified of the course approval status via email;
  - d. The approved course must be completed within thirty (30) days of approval by the Department; and
  - e. Upon successful completion, a signed certificate of completion must be sent to Daniel Kazar at [Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov).
2. Your EMT certification shall be re-instated as provisional. Upon completion of the provisional period, you shall submit a letter to the Department, requesting reinstatement of your non-provisional status with verification from all BLS agencies, for which you were supervised, of the completion status and time frame of supervision.
3. For 180 days, all of your interactions with patients and co-workers shall be supervised by at least one other certified EMT. The probationary period shall not begin until you notify the Department that you have resumed providing direct patient care as an EMT.
4. You shall provide the Department, within fourteen (14) days from the issuance of this letter, with the name(s) of all EMS agencies by which you are employed and/or for which you are volunteering as an EMT, including non-emergency transport agencies. If you begin working and/or volunteering for a new or different agency at any point during your probationary period, you are required to notify the Department within 24 hours of beginning work/volunteering for the new agency. Such notification shall occur via email to Daniel Kazar, Chief of Education, Licensure, and Enforcement ([Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov)).

5. Your supervising EMT and/or EMS provider shall notify OEMS immediately if they observe or are otherwise made aware that you have engaged in any misconduct, exhibit any aggression, or make verbal, and/or physical threats to a patient and/or co-workers. Such notification shall occur via email to Daniel Kazar, Chief of Education, Licensure, and Enforcement ([Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov)).

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:40A-10.3, you may request a hearing before the Office of Administrative Law to contest this Department's decision to suspend and place on probation your EMT certification. In the event that you request a hearing, the suspension and probationary status of your EMT certification shall be held in abeyance until such time as the hearing has been concluded and a final decision is rendered. 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 **22-0143** 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 within 30 days from the date of this Notice shall be interpreted as an acceptance of this Department's decision to place your EMT certification under suspension and probation, thereby negating any further appeal rights and converting this action into a final agency decision. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Daniel Kazar at (609) 633-7777 or via email at [Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov](mailto:Daniel.Kazar@doh.nj.gov).

Sincerely,



Candace Gardner, Paramedic  
Director  
Office of Emergency Medical Services

c: Daniel Kazar, Chief, Education, Licensure, and Enforcement, OEMS  
Zachary Raab, Investigator, OEMS  
NREMT  
File

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