Cellular Phone and Camera Use Policy

PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are:

To ensure that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ adheres to all applicable Medicare, Medicaid, and any other federally funded health care laws, rules, and policies.

To prevent distractions in the workplace and help ensure the safety and privacy of all personnel and the patients we serve.

POLICY

Cellular (cell) phone use and use of personal digital assistants (PDAs) while on duty shall be limited to necessary work-related calls made on work-issued phones. Personal use of cell phones, whether personal or company issued, is only permitted during limited times when work responsibilities are not being performed. Use of personal cameras, whether cell phone cameras, stand-alone cameras, or cameras contained in any other such personal devices, while on duty or when performing any patient care functions for or on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is strictly prohibited. This policy includes both digital and conventional film cameras.

CELLULAR TELEPHONE USE

Personal cellular telephones are permitted to be carried while on duty, but must be placed on silent mode and allow voice mail to answer the incident. Messages may be checked on “down time” when not actively involved in an incident or performing work duties. All personal cell phones must be “intrinsically safe” consistent with the national standards for portable electronic equipment (such as portable radios) carried by emergency service personnel in hazardous environments, and be carried in a safe and concealed area on the person that does not interfere with the physical requirements of the job. Phones shall not be carried in a manner where they could fall off or cause others to be distracted by the presence or appearance of the device.

Cellular phones may be used for personal purposes only on a very limited basis, and conversations shall be limited to five (5) minutes. Personal cell phone use must never cause a delay in responding to a patient or beginning an assignment, and should never delay completing an assignment.

While attending to a patient or while operating a District vehicle, personnel shall not, under any circumstances, respond to (or make) a personal cellular telephone call, send text messages, or check electronic mail on PDAs or other such devices. Should it become necessary to make a call while driving, you shall first pull the district vehicle over to the side of the road.

Personnel are prohibited from using personal cellular telephones or PDAs between the dispatch of an incident and the time that the incident is cleared. This is to prevent any distractions while engaged in patient care, and to avoid any possible interference with equipment that may occur based upon the cellular activity.

Example: Use of a personal cell phone is prohibited while at the hospital and while getting the unit ready to respond or while completing necessary paperwork. But once all post-run activities at the hospital are completed and the unit is back in service, the personal cell phone may be used if necessary in an appropriate location as long as the use does not delay movement of the vehicle back to base or to the next assignment.

CAMERA USE

Under no circumstances shall any personnel be permitted to use the camera function of a personal cellular telephone while on duty.

Personnel are only permitted to use personal cell phone cameras or other image generating devices authorized and issued by CRF&R. These devices shall be used for medical purposes only, such as documenting the position of vehicles and patients at the scene of an accident or documenting mechanism of injury for use by the receiving facility to assist in guiding treatment. Any pictures taken for those purposes will be deleted upon transfer to the receiving facility.

All on-scene photography shall be for clinical and/or documentation purposes only and conducted only at the direction of CRF&R personnel in charge at the scene or by medical command.

Any photographs containing individually identifiable information are covered by the HIPAA Privacy Rule and must be protected in the same manner as patient care reports and other such documentation.

Any on-scene images and any other images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment are solely the property of CRF&R and *not* the property of the individual employee. This includes any image inadvertently taken with an employee owned cell phone camera or other digital imaging device.

No images taken by an employee in the course and scope of their employment may be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, posted, shared, or distributed in any manner without the express, written approval of CRF&R’s Privacy Officer. Example: This prohibition includes posting photos on personal web sites, such as Face Book or MySpace, or on other public safety agency web sites, or e-mailing images to friends, colleagues or others in the EMS/FIRE industry.

PROCEDURES

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and its members conduct themselves in a self-disciplined manner that reflects well on the District, instills confidence, and earns and maintains the trust of our customers.

In order to maintain this goal should a disciplinary action in response to a violation of this policy become necessary, such discipline shall be of a generally positive nature with the primary goal of allowing employees to comply with work rules and procedures.