



## Memo

Date: May 1, 2024  
To: South Carolina Licensed EMS Agencies  
From: Mitch Stewart, EMS Section Manager  
Ed DesChamps, State Medical Control Physician  
Subject: Requirement for Battery-Powered Regulated Portable Suction Units in Ambulances

Dear EMS Agencies,

I hope this memo finds you well. I am writing to inform you of an important clarification regarding regulations for permitted ambulances operating in South Carolina.

Recent questions have been raised regarding the requirements for “portable suction” units on ambulances. The EMS Advisory Council has clarified the intent of this wording. Effective October 1, 2024, all permitted ambulances operated in South Carolina shall be equipped with a battery-powered regulated portable suction unit. This requirement was unanimously adopted by the South Carolina EMS Advisory Council during the March 2024 meeting.

It has always been the intent of the Division of EMS - as reflected by the EMS Advisory Council’s decision - that ambulances carry battery-powered regulated portable suction units with the aim of enhancing the quality of emergency medical care provided to patients across the state. These units are vital in maintaining airway patency and managing respiratory distress in critical situations. The EMS Advisory Council finds that other types of portable suction units which do not have an integral battery-operated mechanism are inadequate for appropriate patient care.

It is imperative that all licensed EMS agencies operating in South Carolina take immediate steps to ensure compliance with this regulation by the specified deadline. Please make the necessary arrangements to acquire and install the required battery-powered regulated portable suction units in all permitted ambulances under your jurisdiction before the deadline.

If you have any questions, or require further clarification regarding this requirement, please do not hesitate to contact your regional EMS Inspector.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your continued commitment to providing high-quality emergency medical services to the residents of South Carolina.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M E Stewart".

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