



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Fire and Emergency Services - NL

MEMO

To: Municipalities, Local Service Districts, Regional Service Boards, and Fire Departments

From: Frederick G. Hollett, Fire Commissioner/Director of Fire Services

Re: Guidance Document for the Use of Automated External Defibrillators

Date: October 11, 2011

The placement and use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) has been increasing throughout the province. A number of municipalities, local service districts, regional service boards, and their fire departments have acquired, or are considering acquiring an AED.

Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL) have received a large number of inquiries related to such acquisitions, and related practices and policies.

In order to properly address the inquiries, we have developed a guidance document which outlines the subject and provides key points to consider in making a decision to acquire and utilize an AED.

I **strongly** recommend that your municipal council, local service district committee, regional service board, and fire department review the document and consider the information provided when making a decision related to the acquisition and use of an AED, the level of service, and the application of the AED.

Feel free to contact FES-NL for further clarification or explanation.

Yours truly,

Frederick G. Hollett
Fire Commissioner/Director of Fire Services

Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL)

Guidance Document for the Use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) by Municipal/Local Service District/Regional Service Board Fire Departments

Background

Amendments to the *Municipalities Act, 1999* were made during the spring 2011 sitting of the House of Assembly. All changes were communicated throughout Newfoundland and Labrador through a circular in July, 2011. Of particular interest to municipal fire departments was the amendment to section 183 of the *Act* now authorizing municipal councils, local service district (LSD) committees, and regional service boards to determine the types of emergencies to which their fire departments will respond. Previously, this authority rested with the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, individual municipal fire departments may seek to expand their level of service to include the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). It is universally acknowledged that greater access to these life-saving tools has the potential to save lives.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist municipalities, LSDs, and regional service boards in making a decision as to whether or not to authorize the use of AEDs by their fire department.

In situations where a service through the use of an AED is already being provided, councils and committees are encouraged to review the fire department level of service.

Level of Service or Application of AEDs

The municipal council, LSD committee, or regional service board may authorize the acquisition of an AED for either an emergency response-non medical or an emergency response-medical.

The difference is as follows:

- Emergency response – non medical
This is where a fire department is providing a response which includes but may not be limited to: fire, vehicle accident, water rescue, confined space, hazmat incident, or rope rescue, where the response has been authorized by the municipality, LSD or regional service board but does **not** include medical response. In this type of response the initial reason to leave the fire hall is **not** for reasons that are medical in nature.

In these circumstances, AEDs may be utilized by trained personnel on any person during a non medical emergency response authorized by the municipality/LSD.

- Emergency response – medical

Medical response is **not** a normal function of a local fire department. This response includes a medical response service up to the level of training and equipment authorized by the municipal council, LSD committee, or regional service board. In this type of response, the initial reason why the department leaves a fire hall is to provide a medical response.

In these circumstances, an AED may be utilized by qualified medical responders during medical emergency response as authorized by the municipality, LSD, or regional service board. Qualified medical responders include: Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) and Paramedics.

Municipal/LSD/Regional Service Board Key Considerations

- A municipality, LSD, regional service board must formally (by motion) authorize and approve the level of service its fire department will deliver, including emergency response – medical.
- If emergency response - medical is authorized, it should be noted that the current Provincial Accident insurance provision for firefighters **does not cover** medical response. Furthermore, the municipal, LSD, regional service board liability insurance as currently exists **does not** provide general liability coverage for a fire department providing medical response.
- When a municipality, LSD, or regional service board considers authorizing emergency response – medical, they **must** consult with their general insurance carrier to ensure they have the appropriate liability insurance including Medical Errors & Omissions Liability and that their personnel have the required level of training for the level of service considered.
- A decision of the municipal council, LSD committee, or regional service board **must** be communicated publicly to all residents.
- The AED must be maintained in accordance with the appropriate manufacturer's operation and maintenance instructions.
- All personnel required to operate the AED must have the proper training by authorized training service providers including any re-training or certification. An AED **must** not be utilized by personnel untrained in its use.

Training Agencies

Appropriate training may be acquired from:

1. St. John Ambulance
2. Canadian Red Cross
3. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador

Or other Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC) approved first aid training providers.

October 4, 2011