PURPOSE:

To ensure all department personnel who possess a North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Service (NCOEMS) credentials remain in an active, functioning status. To monitor and evaluate the standard of care, treatment, and procedures provided to patients by department personnel during response calls thus ensuring that all care provided is in compliance with accepted and approved NCOEMS and Cumberland County EMS protocols and within the accepted standard of care. Policy enforcement and compliance shall be the responsibility of the EMS Quality Assurance Officer.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER:

Quality Assurance (QA) Officer shall be accountable for enforcement and compliance of the Quality Assurance Policy. QA Officer shall be appointed by the Chief Officer of the Cumberland Road Fire Department. QA Officer responsibilities shall include but not limited to:

1. Ensure active members maintain an active, valid credential with NCOEMS.
2. Complete a monthly review of high acuity and a random selection (50%) of EMS response calls by the Cumberland Road Fire Department ensuring all care provided by active, functioning members were within established protocols, procedures, and standard of care as set forth by NCOEMS, Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction, and Cumberland Road Fire Department.
3. Upon discovery of protocol deviation and/or standard of care concern(s), notify the appropriate personnel (Cumberland Road Fire Department Chief Officers and Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative) as set forth by policy.
4. In conjunction with notified personnel, develop a corrective action plan to prevent and defer future occurrences with a 60 day scheduled action plan review.

CREDENTIAL STATUS:

All members of the Cumberland Road Fire Department who are credentialed by NCOEMS and wish to function with their credential with the maximum recognized, functioning credential being an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), must maintain an active status with NCOEMS. Verification of active status is that of the QA Officer with verification being obtained electronically from the EMS Performance Improvement Center ([www.emspic.org](http://www.emspic.org)). To function, credentialed personnel must comply with and meet the following requirements:

1. Copy of current, active credential and verification record must be on file with both the Training and Administrative Divisions of the Cumberland Road Fire Department.
2. Copy of current, active American Heart Association (AHA) BLS (formerly referred to as CPR) credential must be on file with both the Training and Administrative Divisions of the Cumberland Road Fire Department.
3. Credentialed member must attend approved, scheduled continuing education classes and have obtained the minimum number of hours as set forth by NCOEMS for re-credentialing.
4. Credentialed member is responsible and accountable to ensure all necessary and required documentation is submitted within 90 days of the expiring credential.
5. Credentialed member shall be required to attend any and all scheduled mandatory training established by the Cumberland Road Fire Department Training and/or Administrative Divisions.

Verification of all established requirements noted above shall be the responsibility of the Cumberland Road Fire Department QA Officer as noted in the QA Officer responsibility section.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONTHLY REVIEW:

The QA Officer, no later than the 15th of each month shall complete a quality assurance review of emergency medical calls responded to by the Cumberland Road Fire Department in which patient care was rendered the preceding month and meeting the following criteria:

* High acuity/priority patients such as cardiac/respiratory arrest, unresponsive, overdoses, live birth, and/or any deemed by the QA Officer or having been suggested for review by any member of the Cumberland Road Fire Department.
* Randomized, 50% selection of remaining emergency medical calls responded to by the Cumberland Road Fire Department.

Review of calls may also be completed anytime following the call and prior to the 15th of the following month. The QA review shall include but not limited to the following areas/topics for each report reviewed:

* Evaluation of call times, ensuring response times are with an accepted time frame as established by Cumberland Road Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines and/or policies.
* Evaluation of rendered care by credentialed members, ensuring all care provide was within established NCOEMS protocols and procedures.
* Evaluation of rendered care by credentialed members, ensuring rendered care was appropriate for patient complaint and was within the accepted standard of care.
* Evaluation of report documentation, ensuring documentation was completed by the primary care provider and appropriate to include correct spelling and grammar. Any change(s) noted with documentation were completed by the credentialed member initially completing the report with all additions and/or changes being completed as an amendment to the original report.

PROTOCOL DEVIATION/STANDARD OF CARE ISSUE:

Any deviation from protocol, should be approved by Medical Control at Cape Fear Valley Health Emergency Department. Medical Control may be contacted via radio or public service by the credentialed member requesting protocol deviation with the credentialed member ensuring the report documentation includes the requested deviation, approved or denied, and the Emergency Department Physician who was spoken too.

Any deviation from protocol and/or standard of care issues that are discovered during the QA review process and/or are reported/requested for review shall be forwarded to the following:

1. Cumberland Road Fire Department Chief Officers
2. QA Officer (if not previously not notified)
3. Cumberland County Emergency Medical Services System Administration Representative
4. Cumberland County Medical Direction (if necessary)

Upon discovery or report of issue/concern, the QA Officer shall initiate an inquiry with all personnel who were associated with the call directly and/or indirectly. With the inquiry, the QA Officer shall be accountable in evaluating the credentialed member’s reasoning for deviation of protocol and/or standard of care issue/concern. Upon completion of inquiry, the QA Officer will forward inquiry findings to the Cumberland Road Fire Department Chief Officers and Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative for review. The QA Officer, involved credentialed member(s), Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative, and if necessary, Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction may meet to discuss the finding and render any disciplinary and/or corrective actions deemed necessary. Any actions taken may be solely at the discretion of the QA Officer. If a corrective action plan is required to be completed by the credentialed member(s), the action plan must be submitted by the credentialed member(s) within three (3) days of notification. Failure to submit as required may result in further actions to include suspension of the credentialed member(s) ability to function under the approval of Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN(S):

Corrective action plans are completed by credentialed members involved directly with a discovered and/or reported protocol deviation and/or standard of care issue/concern. The corrective action plan is designed to enable a credentialed member to recognize the issue/concern noted and develop an individual process (or procedure) that will assist the credentialed member (and possibly other members) to avoid future occurrences of the same (or similar) incidents. In addition, corrective action plans function as training tools. Corrective actions plans shall include but not limited to the following:

* Description of the protocol deviation and/or standard of care issue/concern as discovered through the review process or reported.
* Reasoning (explanation) for the deviation and/or standard of care issue/concern by the credentialed member.
* Steps or procedures the credentialed member will implement in his/her actions to ensure compliance with established NCOEMS protocols and procedures and accepted standard of care with future medical calls responded to as a credentialed member of the Cumberland Road Fire Department.
* Feedback and/or recommendations as provided by the QA Officer and if necessary, feedback provided by the Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative and Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction.

Upon completion of the corrective action plan, the documentation will be reviewed by the QA Officer with a response being provided back to the credentialed member(s) involved. Following the review, the credentialed, involved member(s) may receive remediation training regarding the deviation and/or standard of care concern and/or receive a suspension from functioning as a credentialed member of the Cumberland Road Fire Department. Length of suspension shall be set forth by the QA Officer in conjunction with the Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative and Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction. Sixty (60) days after notification to the credentialed member(s), a second review with the credentialed, involved member(s) and the QA Officer shall be completed to review the corrective action plan for understanding and compliance. A final review, report shall be provided to the Cumberland County EMS System Administration Representative for documentation purposes.

APPELATE PROCESS:

Credentialed members who have received a suspension of functioning capabilities by the QA Officer may appeal the decision to the Chief Officers of the Cumberland Road Fire Department. The credentialed member will have three (3) days from notification of the suspension to submit the appeal in writing to the Chief Officers. The Chief Officers do have a right to deny the appeal presented by the credentialed member. The Chief Officers within three (3) days of receiving the appeal will, if granted, notify the credentialed member of a scheduled date and time for the appeal at which time the member shall have the opportunity to present his/her case. Following the presented appeal, the credentialed member shall be notified in writing and within three (3) days, the decision of the Chief Officers. The decision by the Chief Officers will be considered the final decision with no further appeal options available for the credentialed member. Suspensions initiated by the Cumberland County EMS Medial Direction shall not be submitted for appeal to Cumberland Road Fire Department Chief Officers. Any suspension initiated by the Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction shall only be appealed to the Cumberland County EMS Medical Direction in compliance with their established procedure.