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HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC

DIVISION 2.5. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES [1797 - 1863] (*Division 2.5 added by Stats. 1980, Ch. 1260.*)

CHAPTER 7. Penalties [1798.200 - 1798.211] (*Chapter 7 added by Stats. 1980, Ch. 1260.*)

1798.200. (a) (1) (A) Except as provided in paragraph (2), an employer of an EMT-I or EMT-II may conduct investigations, as necessary, and take disciplinary action against an EMT-I or EMT-II who is employed by that employer for conduct in violation of subdivision (c). The employer shall notify the medical director of the local EMS agency that has jurisdiction in the county in which the alleged violation occurred within three days when an allegation has been validated as a potential violation of subdivision (c).

(B) Each employer of an EMT-I or EMT-II employee shall notify the medical director of the local EMS agency that has jurisdiction in the county in which a violation related to subdivision (c) occurred within three days after the EMT-I or EMT-II is terminated or suspended for a disciplinary cause, the EMT-I or EMT-II resigns following notification of an impending investigation based upon evidence that would indicate the existence of a disciplinary cause, or the EMT-I or EMT-II is removed from EMT-related duties for a disciplinary cause after the completion of the employer's investigation.

(C) At the conclusion of an investigation, the employer of an EMT-I or EMT-II may develop and implement, in accordance with the guidelines for disciplinary orders, temporary suspensions, and conditions of probation adopted pursuant to Section 1797.184, a disciplinary plan for the EMT-I or EMT-II. Upon adoption of the disciplinary plan, the employer shall submit that plan to the local EMS agency within three working days. The employer's disciplinary plan may include a recommendation that the medical director of the local EMS agency consider taking action against the holder's certificate pursuant to paragraph (3).

(2) If an EMT-I or EMT-II is not employed by an ambulance service licensed by the Department of the California Highway Patrol or a public safety agency or if that ambulance service or public safety agency chooses not to conduct an investigation pursuant to paragraph (1) for conduct in violation of subdivision (c), the medical director of a local EMS agency shall conduct the investigations, and, upon a determination of disciplinary cause, take disciplinary action as necessary against the EMT-I or EMT-II. At the conclusion of these investigations, the medical director shall develop and implement, in accordance with the recommended guidelines for disciplinary orders, temporary orders, and conditions of probation adopted pursuant to Section 1797.184, a disciplinary plan for the EMT-I or EMT-II. The medical director's disciplinary plan may include action against the holder's certificate pursuant to paragraph (3).

(3) The medical director of the local EMS agency may, upon a determination of disciplinary cause and in accordance with regulations for disciplinary processes adopted pursuant to Section 1797.184, deny, suspend, or revoke any EMT-I or EMT-II certificate issued under this division, or may place any EMT-I or EMT-II certificate holder on probation, upon the finding by that medical director of the occurrence of any of the actions listed in subdivision (c) and the occurrence of one of the following:

(A) The EMT-I or EMT-II employer, after conducting an investigation, failed to impose discipline for the conduct under investigation, or the medical director makes a determination that the discipline imposed was not according to the guidelines for disciplinary orders and conditions of probation and the conduct of the EMT-I or EMT-II certificate holder constitutes grounds for disciplinary action against the certificate.

(B) Either the employer of an EMT-I or EMT-II further determines, after an investigation conducted under paragraph (1), or the medical director determines, after an investigation conducted under paragraph (2), that the conduct requires disciplinary action against the certificate.

(4) The medical director of the local EMS agency, after consultation with the employer of an EMT-I or EMT-II, may temporarily suspend, prior to a hearing, any EMT-I or EMT-II certificate or both EMT-I and EMT-II certificates upon a determination that both of the following conditions have been met:

(A) The certificate holder has engaged in acts or omissions that constitute grounds for revocation of the EMT-I or EMT-II certificate.

(B) Permitting the certificate holder to continue to engage in the certified activity without restriction would pose an imminent threat to the public health or safety.

(5) If the medical director of the local EMS agency temporarily suspends a certificate, the local EMS agency shall notify the certificate holder that their EMT-I or EMT-II certificate is suspended and shall identify the reasons therefor. Within three working days of the initiation of the suspension by the local EMS agency, the agency and employer shall jointly investigate the allegation in order for the agency to make a determination of the continuation of the temporary suspension. All investigatory information not otherwise protected by law held by the agency and employer shall be shared between the parties via facsimile transmission or overnight mail relative to the decision to temporarily suspend. The local EMS agency shall decide, within 15 calendar days, whether to serve the certificate holder with an accusation pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the certificate holder files a notice of defense, the hearing shall be held within 30 days of the local EMS agency's receipt of the notice of defense. The temporary suspension order shall be deemed vacated if the local EMS agency fails to make a final determination on the merits within 15 days after the administrative law judge renders the proposed decision.

(6) The medical director of the local EMS agency shall refer, for investigation and discipline, any complaint received on an EMT-I or EMT-II to the relevant employer within three days of receipt of the complaint, pursuant to subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a).

(b) (1) The authority may deny, suspend, or revoke an EMT-P license issued under this division, or may place an EMT-P license issued under this division, or may place an EMT-P licenseholder on probation upon the finding by the director of the occurrence of any of the actions listed in subdivision (c). Proceedings against an EMT-P license or licenseholder shall be held in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(2) On and after January 1, 2023, the Paramedic Disciplinary Review Board shall act on appeals of the authority's final decision to place a licenseholder on probation, suspend or revoke an EMT-P license, and consider appeals regarding denial of licensure, pursuant to Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797.125) of Chapter 3 of this division.

(c) Any of the following actions shall be considered evidence of a threat to the public health and safety and may result in the denial, suspension, or revocation of a certificate or license issued under this division, or in the placement on probation of a certificate holder or licenseholder under this division:

(1) Fraud in the procurement of any certificate or license under this division.

(2) Gross negligence.

(3) Repeated negligent acts.

(4) Incompetence.

(5) The commission of any fraudulent, dishonest, or corrupt act that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of prehospital personnel.

(6) Conviction of any crime that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of prehospital personnel. The record of conviction or a certified copy of the record shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction.

(7) Violating or attempting to violate directly or indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate, any provision of this division or the regulations adopted by the authority pertaining to prehospital personnel.

(8) Violating or attempting to violate any federal or state statute or regulation that regulates narcotics, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances.

(9) Addiction to, the excessive use of, or the misuse of, alcoholic beverages, narcotics, dangerous drugs, or controlled substances.

(10) Functioning outside the supervision of medical control in the field care system operating at the local level, except as authorized by any other license or certification.

(11) Demonstration of irrational behavior or occurrence of a physical disability to the extent that a reasonable and prudent person would have reasonable cause to believe that the ability to perform the duties normally expected may be impaired.

(12) Unprofessional conduct exhibited by any of the following:

(A) The mistreatment or physical abuse of any patient resulting from force in excess of what a reasonable and prudent person trained and acting in a similar capacity while engaged in the performance of their duties would use if confronted with a similar circumstance. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prohibit an EMT-I, EMT-II, or EMT-P from assisting a peace officer, or a peace officer who is acting in the dual capacity of peace officer and EMT-I, EMT-II, or EMT-P, from using that force that is reasonably necessary to effect a lawful arrest or detention.

(B) The failure to maintain confidentiality of patient medical information, except as disclosure is otherwise permitted or required by law in Part 2.6 (commencing with Section 56) of Division 1 of the Civil Code.

(C) The commission of any sexually related offense specified under Section 290 of the Penal Code.

(d) The information shared among EMT-I, EMT-II, and EMT-P employers, medical directors of local EMS agencies, the authority, and EMT-I and EMT-II certifying entities shall be deemed to be an investigative communication that is exempt from public disclosure as a public record pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 7923.600) of Chapter 1 of Part 5 of Division 10 of Title 1 of the Government Code. A formal disciplinary action against an EMT-I, EMT-II, or EMT-P shall be considered a public record available to the public, unless otherwise protected from disclosure pursuant to state or federal law.

(e) For purposes of this section, "disciplinary cause" means an act that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, and duties of an EMT-I, EMT-II, or EMT-P and is evidence of a threat to the public health and safety described in subdivision (c).

(Amended by Stats. 2022, Ch. 28, Sec. 85. (SB 1380) Effective January 1, 2023.)

1798.201. (a) When information comes to the attention of the medical director of the local EMS agency that an EMT-P licenseholder has committed any act or omission that appears to constitute grounds for disciplinary action under this division, the medical director of the local EMS agency may evaluate the information to determine if there is reason to believe that disciplinary action may be necessary.

(b) If the medical director sends a recommendation to the authority for further investigation or discipline of the licenseholder, the recommendation shall include all documentary evidence collected by the medical director in evaluating whether or not to make that recommendation. The recommendation and accompanying evidence shall be deemed in the nature of an investigative communication and be protected by the provisions listed in Section 7920.505 of the Government Code. In deciding what level of disciplinary action is appropriate in the case, the authority shall consult with the medical director of the local EMS agency.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 615, Sec. 238. (AB 474) Effective January 1, 2022. Operative January 1, 2023, pursuant to Sec. 463 of Stats. 2021, Ch. 615.)

1798.202. (a) The director of the authority or the medical director of the local EMS agency, after consultation with the relevant employer, may temporarily suspend, prior to hearing, any EMT-P license upon a determination that: (1) the licensee has engaged in acts or omissions that constitute grounds for revocation of the EMT-P license; and (2) permitting the licensee to continue to engage in the licensed activity, or permitting the licensee to continue in the licensed activity without restriction, would present an imminent threat to the public health or safety. When the suspension is initiated by the local EMS agency, subdivision (b) shall apply. When the suspension is initiated by the director of the authority, subdivision (c) shall apply.

(b) The local EMS agency shall notify the licensee that his or her EMT-P license is suspended and shall identify the reasons therefor. Within three working days of the initiation of the suspension by the local EMS agency, the agency shall transmit to the authority, via facsimile transmission or overnight mail, all documentary evidence collected by the local EMS agency relative to the decision to temporarily suspend. Within two working days of receipt of the local EMS agency's documentary evidence, the director of the authority shall determine the need for the licensure action. Part of that determination shall include an evaluation of the need for continuance of the suspension during the licensure action review process. If the director of the authority determines that the temporary suspension order should not continue, the authority shall immediately notify the licensee that the temporary suspension is lifted. If the director of the authority determines that the temporary suspension order should continue, the authority shall immediately notify the licensee of the decision to continue the temporary suspension and shall, within 15 calendar days of receipt of the EMS agency's documentary evidence, serve the licensee with a temporary suspension order and accusation pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(c) The director of the authority shall initiate a temporary suspension with the filing of a temporary suspension order and accusation pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code and shall notify the director of the local EMS agency, and the relevant employer.

(d) If the licensee files a notice of defense, the hearing shall be held within 30 days of the authority's receipt of the notice of defense. The temporary suspension order shall be deemed vacated if the authority fails to make a final determination on the merits within 15 days after the administrative law judge renders the proposed decision.

(Repealed and added by Stats. 1994, Ch. 709, Sec. 8. Effective January 1, 1995.)

1798.205. Any alleged violations of local EMS agency transfer protocols, guidelines, or agreements shall be evaluated by the local EMS agency. If the local EMS agency has concluded that a violation has occurred, it shall take whatever corrective action it deems appropriate within its jurisdiction, including referrals to the district attorney under Sections 1798.206 and 1798.208 and shall notify the State Department of Health Services if it concludes that any violation of Sections 1317 to 1317.9a, inclusive, has occurred.

(Added by Stats. 1987, Ch. 1240, Sec. 18.)

1798.206. Any person who violates this part, the rules and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, or county ordinances adopted pursuant to this part governing patient transfers, is guilty of a misdemeanor. The Attorney General or the district attorney may prosecute any of these misdemeanors which falls within his or her jurisdiction.

(Amended by Stats. 1987, Ch. 1225, Sec. 17.)

1798.207. (a) It is a misdemeanor for any person to knowingly and willfully engage in conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing or certification examination, or the administration of any licensing or certification examination, conducted pursuant to this division, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- (1) Conduct that violates the security of the examination material.
- (2) Removing from the examination room any examination materials without authorization.
- (3) The unauthorized reproduction by any means of any portion of the actual licensing or certification examination.
- (4) Aiding by any means the unauthorized reproduction of any portion of the actual licensing or certification examination.
- (5) Paying or using professional or paid examination-takers, for the purpose of reconstructing any portion of the licensing or certification examination.
- (6) Obtaining or attempting to obtain examination questions or other examination material from examinees or by any other method, except by specific authorization either before, during, or after an examination.
- (7) Using or purporting to use any examination questions or materials that were improperly removed or taken from any examination for the purpose of instructing or preparing any applicant for examination.
- (8) Selling, distributing, buying, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a future, current, or previously administered licensing or certification examination.
- (9) Communicating with any other examinee during the administration of a licensing or certification examination.
- (10) Copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee.
- (11) Having in one's possession during the administration of the licensing or certification examination any books, equipment, notes written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed, or otherwise authorized to be in one's possession during the examination.
- (12) Impersonating any examinee or having an impersonator take the licensing or certification examination on one's behalf.

(b) The penalties provided in this section are not exclusive remedies and shall not preclude remedies provided pursuant to any other provision of law.

(c) In addition to any other penalties, a person found guilty of violating this section shall be liable for the actual damages sustained by the agency administering the examination not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the costs of litigation.

(Added by Stats. 1992, Ch. 215, Sec. 1. Effective January 1, 1993.)

1798.208. Whenever any person who has engaged, or is about to engage, in any act or practice which constitutes, or will constitute, a violation of any provision of this division, the rules and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, or local EMS agency mandated protocols, guidelines, or transfer agreements, the superior court in and for the county wherein the acts or practices take place or are about to take place may issue an injunction or other appropriate order restraining the conduct on application of the authority, the Attorney General, or the district attorney of the county. The proceedings under this section shall be governed by Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 525) of Title 7 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure, except that no undertaking shall be required.

(Amended by Stats. 1987, Ch. 1240, Sec. 19.)

1798.209. The local EMS agency may place on probation, suspend, or revoke the approval under this division of any training program for failure to comply with this division or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

(Added by Stats. 1994, Ch. 709, Sec. 9. Effective January 1, 1995.)

1798.210. (a) The Paramedic Disciplinary Review Board may impose an administrative fine of up to two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per violation against a licensed paramedic found to have committed any of the actions described by subdivision (c) of Section 1798.200 that did not result in actual harm to a patient. Fines may not be imposed if a paramedic has previously been disciplined by the authority or the board for any other act committed within the immediately preceding five-year period.

(b) The board shall adopt regulations establishing an administrative fine structure, taking into account the nature and gravity of the violation. The administrative fine shall not be imposed in conjunction with a suspension for the same violation, but may be imposed in conjunction with probation for the same violation except when the conditions of the probation require a paramedic's personal time or expense for training, clinical observation, or related corrective instruction.

(c) In assessing the fine, the board shall give due consideration to the appropriateness of the amount of the fine with respect to factors that include the gravity of the violation, the good faith of the paramedic, the history of previous violations, any discipline imposed by the paramedic's employer for the same occurrence of that conduct, as reported pursuant to Section 1799.112, and the totality of the discipline to be imposed. The imposition of the fine shall be subject to the administrative adjudication provisions set forth in Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(d) If a paramedic does not pay the administrative fine imposed by the board and chooses not to renew their license, the board may enforce the order for repayment in any appropriate court. This right of enforcement shall be in addition to any other rights the board may have to require a paramedic to pay costs.

(e) In any action for collection of an administrative fine, proof of the board's decision shall be conclusive proof of the validity of the order of payment and the terms for payment.

(f) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the authority shall not license or renew the license of any paramedic who has failed to pay an administrative fine ordered under this section.

(2) The authority may, in its discretion, conditionally license or renew for a maximum of one year the license of any paramedic who demonstrates financial hardship and who enters into a formal agreement with the board to reimburse the board within that one-year period for the unpaid fine.

(g) All funds recovered under this section shall be deposited into the state General Fund.

(h) This section does not preclude the board from imposing an administrative fine in a stipulated settlement.

(i) For purposes of this section, "licensed paramedic" includes a paramedic whose license has lapsed or has been surrendered.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 463, Sec. 8. (AB 450) Effective January 1, 2022.)

1798.211. When making a decision regarding a disciplinary action pursuant to Section 1798.200 or Section 1798.210, the authority, the board, and, if applicable, the administrative law judge, shall give credit for the time during which the licensee was subject to disciplinary action imposed by the employer and for the time during which the licensee was under immediate suspension imposed by the local EMS agency for the same conduct.

(Amended by Stats. 2021, Ch. 463, Sec. 9. (AB 450) Effective January 1, 2022.)