



Department
of Health

Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and
Trauma Systems

POLICY STATEMENT

Supersedes/Updates: New

No. 17 - 05

Date: April 13, 2017

Re: Certified Athletic
Trainers

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide EMS providers knowledge and understanding of the role, responsibility and capabilities of Certified Athletic Trainers so that when EMS is called to a sporting event, the patient will benefit from positive communication and consistent prehospital emergency medical care.

BACKGROUND:

EMS often responds to sporting events where Certified Athletic Trainers are employed, such as public schools, sports leagues and college sporting events. In many instances, a Certified Athletic Trainer may be the highest trained healthcare provider available when an athlete has sustained an injury or has become ill. It is important that EMS providers and Certified Athletic Trainers work together.

Certified Athletic Trainers are certified under NYS Education Law, Article 162. Section 8351 defines an Athletic Trainer as:

“... any person who is duly certified in accordance with this article to perform athletic training under the supervision of a physician and limits his or her practice to secondary schools, institutions of postsecondary education, professional athletic organizations, or a person who, under the supervision of a physician, carries out comparable functions on orthopedic athletic injuries, excluding spinal cord injuries, in a health care organization. Supervision of an athletic trainer by a physician shall be continuous but shall not be construed as requiring the physical presence of the supervising physician at the time and place where such services are performed.”

Certified Athletic Trainers manage athletic injuries and illnesses such as sprains, strains, contusions, and postsurgical reconditioning. Their responsibilities include:

- Identification of factors that may contribute to athletic injury and eliminate them before an injury occurs;
- conduct pre-participation screenings;
- develop appropriate fitness and training programs;
- apply protective or injury preventative devices, such as tape, bandages, or braces;
- maintain CPR and AED training;
- recognition and evaluation of potentially serious, life threatening injuries; and
- administering appropriate first aid and emergency care to the injured athlete.

At athletic events, Certified Athletic Trainers provide emergency care and first aid to individuals who have sustained an athletic injury, evaluate the injury(s), and make referrals to appropriate medical personnel. Through individual consultation and lectures, Certified Athletic Trainers also instruct coaches, athletes, parents, medical personnel, and the community in the care and prevention of athletic injuries.

Additional information regarding Certified Athletic Trainers can be found at:

<http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/at/>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

EMS agencies should be aware of those facilities, both public and private, that may have Athletic Trainers working with teams at their sporting events. Meeting with Certified Athletic Trainers and discussing the EMS agency resources, scope of practice and protocols, will assist developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities, improve relationships and should it become necessary, the prehospital care provided at the scene of a medical emergency. As a part of the planning process the agency medical director should be contacted to discuss specific issues and treatment plans.