

Columbia University Emergency Medical Service Bylaws

Edited November 2012

101 Low Library, New York, NY 10027
cava@columbia.edu

For Medical Emergencies:
x99 from a Columbia extension
1.212.854.5555 from an outside line

Article 1 – Organization

Section 1 – Name

The organization shall be known for business purposes as “Columbia University Emergency Medical Service” hereinafter in this document “the Service.” However, due to the long history associated with the name “Columbia Area Volunteer Ambulance,” and the associated acronym “CAVA,” and the familiarity of this acronym to the community, “CAVA” will be retained and recognized herein as a casual name for the service.

Section 2 – Purpose

The primary purpose of the Service is to provide and maintain one or more New York State Department of Health Certified ambulances and provide emergency care and transportation of the sick and injured to reduce morbidity and mortality in the Area of Service as defined in Article 1 - Section 3. The Service will also provide training on subjects relating to emergency medical services to its members and the community. Furthermore, the service will work in cooperation with other departments and organizations within Columbia University to provide the highest level of safety for the community.

Section 3 – Area of Service

The purposes for which the Service is formed shall be performed within the State, County, and City of New York. The service shall operate primarily in and around the buildings and dormitories of Columbia University, as defined in the most recent Department of Health Ambulance Certification. This primary operating area is subject to cooperative emergency plans, formal and informal, established by the authority of the Executive Board, and further subject to the requirements of applicable law or governmental regulation. Furthermore, the Service may operate outside of its primary operating area provided such operation is not in violation of any law, regulation, or statute and has been approved by the Executive Board.

Article 2 – Membership

Section 1 – Classes

There shall be four (4) classes of membership: Probationary, Active, Inactive, and Honorary.

Section 2 – Eligibility for Membership

Any person at least eighteen (18) years of age who is physically, and psychologically capable of carrying out the duties required of them, and who is associated, as student, staff, or faculty member with Columbia University shall be eligible for membership as a Probationary or Active member of the Service. Honorary members need not meet the above eligibility requirements.

Section 3 – Probationary Members

Each newly accepted member shall be deemed a Probationary member until such person has completed or complied with such courses or standards of training and conduct as shall be, from time to time, prescribed by the Executive Board and Training Board as prerequisites for active membership. A probationary member shall not be entitled to vote. A probationary member will be nominated for active membership by the Executive Board and voted upon by the Medical Board upon completion of prescribed prerequisites established by the Executive Board and Medical Board.

Section 4 – Active Members

Active members shall be those persons who have been elected to membership as herein provided, have satisfactorily completed their period of probationary membership, have met the prescribed standards applicable thereto, and have completed or complied with such other courses or standards of training as has been prescribed by the Executive Board and Medical Board from time to time. Each active member shall be entitled to one vote at membership meetings. Active members shall belong to one of two (2) ranks: Crew Chief and Driver. Each rank shall have specific duties, responsibilities, and privileges as dictated by the Executive Board and Medical Board.

Section 5 – Inactive Members

To request Inactive status, an Active member must request, in writing, Inactive status from the Executive Board, which may accept such request by majority vote. The maximum time allowed for the status of Inactive member is one (1) year, at which time said member shall be asked to resign. Upon failure of said member, after notice, to send a letter of resignation, Section 8 shall be invoked. In order to re-activate Inactive status, the Inactive member must request approval, in writing, from the

Executive Board, which may approve such a request by majority vote. Inactive members may not cast a vote at any meeting of the Service.

Section 6 – Honorary Members

Honorary members shall be those persons elected to honorary membership by the Service in recognition of outstanding efforts in the interest of the Service or other meritorious achievement. Honorary members may attend all membership meetings, drills and parades, but shall not operate an ambulance, render medical aid in the name of the Service or be entitled a vote at any meeting of the Service.

Section 7 – Election of Members

Application for membership shall be submitted, at such time and in such form as may be required by the Executive Board. An applicant shall be admitted to probationary membership at the decision of the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall propose recipients of honorary membership, and such proposal shall be presented at a membership meeting. At such meeting, election as an honorary member shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present, a quorum being present.

Section 8 – Suspension or Removal

For serious actions prejudicial to the best interests of the Service, the Director or Captain may suspend the accused member upon review of the facts available at that time for a period not to exceed forty-eight (48) hours, requiring then, a full investigation before the Executive Board for non-medical matters or the Medical Board for medical matters. In the case that such a distinction is not forthcoming the investigation will be conducted by the Executive Board and Medical Board jointly. The specific disciplinary procedure shall be determined by the Standard Operating Procedures.

If either the Medical Board or Executive Board deems the performance of an individual member not up to par with the standards of the Service, whether it be an unacceptably low level of activity as determined by the Executive Board, a failure to maintain knowledge and skills of medical protocols as prescribed by the Medical Board, a failure to show themselves as a valuable asset to the Service, a full investigation will be conducted by the Executive Board and Medical Board jointly.

The Executive Board will inform this member of this investigation prior to it taking place. If the joint boards conclude that the above concerns are legitimate, the member under scrutiny will be given written notification of the results of the investigation, which includes a finite amount of time, not to be less than one (1) month, to improve their performance. If unable to improve, the membership of the member under scrutiny will be terminated.

Article 3 – Duties of Members

Section 1 – Activity

Members are obligated to attend all meetings and other activities at which their attendance is required, unless excused by one of the Executive Officers for good cause shown. Three unexcused absences from scheduled meetings of the Service or other activities at which the member's attendance is required, upon written notice, shall result in automatic inactivation of membership. Provided that a member whose membership has inactivated automatically, pursuant to the foregoing, this membership may be reactivated by a majority vote of the Executive Board, upon finding that a good cause for absence existed although such absence was not previously excused. In order to maintain active membership, an individual shall be on duty at least a number of shifts per month as currently mandated by the Executive Board or receive documented temporary relief of responsibilities from the Executive Board as it sees fit.

Section 2 – Confidential Information

All information, concerning persons to whom aid is rendered or concerning members of their families, coming into the possession of any member of the Service in the course of performance of their duties shall be kept confidential and may be disclosed only to an Officer in the Service, a physician, a nurse, or a hospital attendant when necessary to aid in the diagnosis or treatment of a patient, or to a public official in the performance of their duties. An exception to this would be the discussion of individual call sheets in relation to training and shall be considered within the confidential guidelines aforementioned. The Director may release information as deemed appropriate, so long as such release conforms to all applicable Laws and Regulations.

Article 4 – Meetings

Section 1 – Regular Meetings

Meetings of the Service shall be held at such place and time as may from time to time be designated by the Executive Board with not less than five (5) nor more than thirty (30) days notice to members prior to such date.

Section 2 – Annual Meeting

There shall be an annual meeting of the Service, which shall be held in December, for the purpose of election of the Executive Board and such other business as shall come before the Meeting. The date and location of this meeting shall be set by the Executive Board and notice must be given not less than five (5) nor more than thirty (30) days prior to such date.

Section 3 – Quorum

At each Regular Meeting and Annual Meeting of the members of the Service, the presence of two thirds (2/3) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If, during a vote, members choose to abstain from voting, their presence will not be counted towards quorum for the particular business the general membership is voting upon. Whether or not there is quorum at any meeting, a majority of the members present and entitled to vote thereat may adjourn the meeting provided that the new meeting date shall be given to all members at least five (5) days prior to such new meeting following such adjourned meeting.

Article 5 – Executive Board

Section 1 – Duties

The Executive Board shall be vested with the management and control of all the property and administrative affairs of the Service pursuant to law, except as may otherwise be provided by these Bylaws. In the performance of its functions and duties, the Executive Board may appoint such committees from among the membership of the Service as it may deem appropriate; it shall have exclusive authority to audit bills, and no funds shall be disbursed except by its order. No communication to anyone other than a member of the Service may be signed in the name of the Service except upon order of, or following authority conferred by the Executive Board. All Officers are responsible for maintaining regular contact with the Director. The Executive Board shall further: adjudicate disputes, approve certain uses of the ambulance for special events, conduct non-medical disciplinary hearings, interview and vote on candidates for probationary membership, review and grant requests for inactive status, and any other powers or responsibilities granted or implied herein.

Section 2 – Composition

The Executive Board shall consist of the following: Director (Chief Executive Officer), Captain (Chief Medical Officer), Operations Officer, Personnel Officer, and Member-at-Large.

Section 3 – Election and Term of Office

Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in the month of December and, except as hereinafter provided, shall serve for a term of one (1) year and until their successors are elected, said term to start on the first Monday of January.

Any nomination made by a voting member, duly seconded by another voting member, and accepted by the nominated party, will be considered valid and recorded by the Personnel Officer or other selected member, so long as the nominated party fulfills the prerequisites of office as provided herein. No member may hold more than one executive office at a time.

The nomination and election shall proceed: Director, Captain, Operations Officer, Personnel Officer, Member-at-Large. Elections will be held by secret ballot and the balloting conducted by a committee made up of three (3) or more members not nominated for the office being elected, appointed by the Director. If the committee is unable to reach consensus regarding the results of a ballot, the Director shall appoint another committee with the same restrictions but different members. If this committee fails to reach consensus, a revote shall be held. If candidates each receive

an equal number of votes, a run off ballot shall be held in which only the candidates involved in the tie shall be eligible to receive votes. The ballots of a run off shall be counted as with a regular election. A separate ballot, in the order described above, will elect each office, and the results of the each election will be announced to the members prior to nominations for the next office.

Section 4 – Meetings

The Executive Board shall hold regular meetings no less often than monthly, between the months of August and June and at such times and places as it may determine. All meetings shall meet upon the call of the Director or upon the request of any two (2) Officers provided at least twenty-four hours (24) and at most five (5) days notice is given. Executive Board meetings must be attended only by Executive Officers provided that the Director makes no specific exemption.

Section 5 – Quorum

An entirety of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at Executive Board meetings.

Article 6 – Absence from Office

Throughout the duration of their one (1) year term, Executive Board Officers cannot be inactive for more than two (2) consecutive weeks or four (4) cumulative weeks while the Service is providing service to the University. Should the period of absence be exceeded for any circumstances, the Officer should be considered in a state of truancy until investigation by the Executive Board can be carried out.

Greater periods of time of inactivity shall be granted by the Executive Board for Officer positions not held by Crew Chiefs. For Officer positions held by Crew Chiefs, a majority decision of by the Executive Board and Medical Board must be made. The Officer requesting an anticipated period of inactivity must provide this request and proof of provisions in writing at least one (1) month in advance for a smooth transition of operation for the Service. For unanticipated periods of inactivity, the Officer shall make all possible efforts to contact the Executive Board of his or her intentions and provide written documentation for reasons of inactivity. The Executive Board will work to create provisions for a smooth transition of operation for the Service in that Officer's absence as per Section 7.

Section 7 – Vacancies

A vacancy in the Executive Board shall be filled by an election by the members of the Service at the next following membership meeting. Officers so elected shall serve for the not yet expired balance of the term during which elected. The Director, or Captain in the Director's absence, may designate an acting Officer until such an election by

the membership of the Service. In the event that a vacancy is created by a change in the status of a member such that said member is ineligible for the position held, the Executive Board may opt for the Director to appoint an Acting Officer who will occupy the position until the elected officer is eligible to once again occupy the office, by majority vote of the remaining members.

Section 8 – Unexcused Absence

Any member of the Executive Board absent without adequate excuse from three consecutive scheduled meetings of the Board shall thereby forfeit his office as an Officer, and there shall thereby exist a vacancy to be filled as herein provided. The adequacy of any excuse shall be determined by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Executive Board present at any meeting at which the matter is brought up.

Section 9 – Removal From Office

The removal from office of any Executive Officer may be initiated by written charges from at least two (2) members with a copy presented to each of the Executive Officers. The Director, or Captain shall present the charges if the Director is the charged Officer, at the next Membership Meeting, and all deliberations shall be tabled until the following Membership Meeting. At said meeting the charges shall be raised and the charging and charged parties shall be given a reasonable opportunity to address the members. A two-thirds (2/3) vote, a quorum being present, shall be required to effect the removal of the officer. Should this process remove an officer, the vacancy shall be filled as described in Section 6.

Article 6 – Executive Officers

Section 1 – Designation

The Executive Officers of the Service shall be the Officers of the Executive Board, so defined as a Director, a Captain, an Operations Officer, a Personnel Officer, and a Member-at-Large. All officers shall be elected by the membership of the Service at the December meeting.

Section 2 – Director

The Director of the Executive Board shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Service. The Director is the highest-ranking officer of the Service. The function of the Director is to receive the reports and monitor the actions of the other officers; to assure the continued operation of the Service; to act as a liaison with Columbia University, Columbia University Security, Columbia University and Barnard College Health Services, St. Luke's Hospital, Fire Department of New York and Bureau of EMS, New York Police Department, and all other external agencies. The Director shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Board and Membership Meetings. If the Director **is** not present at a meeting of the Board, the officers may elect a temporary Director from among those present. The Director must be an active Crew Chief.

Section 3 – Captain

The Captain shall be the Chief Medical Officer of the Service. The Captain will chair all meetings of the Medical Board, coordinate educational presentations, organize training for all probationary and active members, review reports of patient contact, keep in regular contact with the Medical Director of the Service, ensure that minutes are taken at Medical Board Meetings and distributed to the Medical Board within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting, and perform such other duties as may be directed by the Executive Board. The Captain must be an active Crew Chief.

Section 4 – Operations Officer

The Operations Officer shall be the Equipment and Maintenance Officer of the Service. The Operations Officer shall be responsible for maintaining the ambulance and the office. The Operations Officer shall assist the Director and shall perform such other duties as designated by the Executive Board. The Operations Officer shall be a D3 or Crew Chief at the time of his election except when no eligible candidate has been duly nominated a D2 or D1 may be nominated.

Section 5 – Personnel Officer

The Personnel Officer shall be the Human Resources Officer of the Service. The Personnel Officer shall be responsible for all duty and stand-by assignments of Service personnel, shall be responsible for ensuring that minutes and attendance are

recorded at all Membership and Board Meetings and distributed to the corps, maintaining records of personnel and Service activities, maintaining and distributing a current roster of active members within one (1) week of any changes of membership, and shall perform such other duties as may be directed by the Executive Board. The Personnel Officer must be an active member.

Section 6 – Member-at-Large

The Member-at-Large shall be a representative of the active members of the Service. The Member-at-Large or a designated surrogate must be present at all Executive Board meetings. The Member-at-Large has the same voting capabilities as any other officer of the Executive Board. The duties of the Member-at-Large are to be present at all Executive Board Meetings and remain in regular confidential contact with the members of the corps, particularly those not the rank of Crew Chief. This contact with members of the corps must be submitted to the Executive Board twenty-four (24) hours in advance of each Executive Board meeting. All discussion, verbal, written, or otherwise transmitted must occur with full confidentiality ensured of all parties. The Director, in conjunction with the Captain, can add to the duties of the Member-at-Large for finite tasks such that they do not interfere with their primary responsibilities to the corps. The Member-at-Large shall be a D1 at the time of his election except when no eligible candidate has been duly nominated a D2 may be nominated. If no eligible candidate of D1 or D2 status has been duly nominated, then a D3 may be nominated. The term of the Member-at-Large will be one (1) semester, and a special election will be held at the end of each semester to elect the Member-at-Large.

Section 7 – Appointments

The Executive Board may appoint Assistant Officers at its discretion. Appointment of an Assistant Officer occurs with a nomination from an Officer at an Executive Board meeting, and a majority vote from the Officers provided a quorum is present. The Executive Board can designate a title for each Assistant Officer position. Positions can be revoked upon majority vote of the Executive Board. Positions shall last no longer than the term of any single Executive Board. Assistant Officers have no vote at Board meetings and may attend Board meetings at their discretion unless otherwise mandated by the Officers of the Executive Board.

Article 7 – Medical Board

Section 1 – Duties

The Medical Board is responsible for decisions regarding issues directly related to medical care. The function of the Medical Board will be: to vote on probationary members seeking active status; to demote or place on probationary status active members; to promote active members seeking promotion; to review all medical incident reports and selected calls; to propose medical operating procedures, and to address any other matter concerning the medical care rendered by the Service.

Section 2 – Composition

The Medical Board will be composed of the active Crew Chiefs of the Service and chaired by the Captain.

Section 3 – Meetings

The Medical Board shall hold no fewer meetings than there are regular member meetings in a given time period. The Captain, Director, or two (2) active Crew Chiefs, provided at least twenty-four (24) hours and at most thirty (30) days, may call Medical Board meetings, notice is given. Any member other than active Crew Chiefs may not attend medical Board meetings unless the Captain or Director grants a specific exception along with a majority vote of the Medical Board.

Section 4 – Quorum

Two-thirds (2/3) of the Medical Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If, during a vote, members of the medical board choose to abstain from voting, their presence will not be counted towards quorum for the particular business the Medical Board is voting upon.

Section 5 – Unexcused Absence

Any member of the Medical Board absent without adequate excuse from three consecutive meetings of the Board shall thereby forfeit his office as an Officer. The adequacy of any excuse shall be determined by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Medical Board present at any meeting at which the matter is brought up, a quorum being present.

Article 8 – Medical Officers

The Medical Officers of the Service shall be the Officers of the Medical Board, so defined as all Active members with the rank of Crew Chief. The Medical Board shall grant promotion to Crew Chiefs at its discretion. The Medical Officers will be the highest-ranking member of a crew, and will be responsible for the well being of any patients, the crew, ambulance and other Service property during the shift. The Medical Officers shall ensure that all documentation pertaining to any call is completed, and that the Director or Captain is informed of any unusual incidents. Any member promoted to Crew Chief will immediately be granted the title Medical Officer. Should a Crew Chief be demoted the title of Medical Officer is rescinded with his rank.

Article 9 – Uniforms and Insignia

Section 1 – Description

The specific uniforms of the Service shall be those as defined by the Standard Operating Procedures and in the event that the Standard Operating Procedures do not define the specifics of a uniform, the specifics of the uniform shall be at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Section 2 – Limitation to Authorized Insignia

Only that uniform or insignia which abides by the Uniform Standards outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures may be worn by members while on the business of the Service, and the same may be worn or displayed in any manner authorized by the Executive Board. Any other use of the Uniform or Insignia of the Service is prohibited.

Section 3 – Disposition of Uniform and Insignia

Insignia and articles of uniforms containing insignia or other distinctive identification relating to the Service may not be passed from one member to another without express authorization from the Service as they are the express property of the Service. The Executive Board reserves the right to demand return of all such items issued by the Service at the cessation of membership, with exception for those members as determined by the Executive Board. All such items purchased or otherwise obtained by a member, which display insignia of the Service or other marks identifiable with the Service must be turned in to the Service, or the insignia and other identifying marks removed and turned in to the Service, upon cessation of membership. The Operations Officer shall keep a record of those items issued to members and shall recall them upon cessation of membership.

Article 10 – Operating Rules and Regulations

The Director and Captain may, from time to time, propose operating rules and regulations, and amendments thereto for submission to the Executive Board or the Medical Board. The Executive Board must vote upon all administrative rules or regulations. The Medical Board must vote upon all medical rules or regulations. If there is a disagreement on whether the rules and regulations are medical or administrative, both boards will jointly vote on the changes. A majority of votes constitutes the acceptance of a rule or regulation. All accepted rules or regulations shall be obligatory on all members of the Service within a reasonable time after promulgation to the membership in writing. The compilation of operating rules and regulations shall be known as the Standard Operating Procedures of the Service, and shall be available to all members.

Article 11 – Control by Membership

Notwithstanding anything herein contained, the ultimate power of government resides in the membership. Any action, decision or determination of the Executive Board, of any officer, of any committee or other organ of the Service, with the exception of the Medical Board, may be overruled, reversed, rescinded by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all active members of the Service; provided, however, that no decision, act or determination shall be overruled, altered or rescinded when such overruling, alteration or rescission, shall involve the Service in breach of any contract or other lawful commitment that has been validly entered into by the Executive Board. Such overruling, alteration or rescission may be voted upon only at a membership meeting, a quorum being present, the notice of which shall have specified the items to be overruled, altered or rescinded, and which notice shall have been sent not less than five (5) days, nor more than thirty (30) days in advance of such meeting to all active members of the Service.

Article 12 – Amendments

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing at a membership meeting of the Service, seconded by not less than two (2) active members. The Director shall read them as new business, whereupon they shall be deferred to the next meeting. Notice of the next meeting shall include the full text of the proposed amendment, with appropriate indication of the changes thereby made. At such next meeting, said amendment shall be voted upon by voting members of the Service. Any amendment may be adopted by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present and entitled to vote, a quorum being present, except that any provision of these Bylaws that require the vote of a larger number of the members may be amended only by a vote of such a larger majority as herein specified.