

TRB EMS Subcommittee ANB10(5)

# EMS Safety Summit 2012 Safety Systems, Strategies and Solutions

## Implementing New Policies Matt Crossman, Medavie, PE Island EMS

February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012



# Medavie EMS Island EMS

## Code 1 Speed Restriction Policy



## The Policy

- Medavie EMS implemented a policy for its staff that restricted paramedics from drive no more than 10 km over the speed limit during an emergency call except when in four lane 100 series highways were they were permitted to exceed the speed limit by 20 km/h over the posted speed limit.
- One of the main reasons that the policy was implemented was that the evidence showed responding to emergencies with higher speeds meant greater risk, and the time saved was not worth the risk to the staff, patients, and public.



### The reactions

#### Paramedics worried by speed limit

The article that represents P.E.I. paramedics is split with a new one that covers the speed of ambulances in the headlines.

Island EMS withdrew the change in however, but the union says it's still working.

They couldn't come up with a single case where an accident that was speed-related occurred with an ambulance on Prince Edward Island.

Internal Links

- Ambulance speed limit
- Ambulance speed limit

Watch your speed, it's an emergency

When responding to medical emergencies, paramedics say that exceeding the speed limit is not just a bad idea, but one that is too fast. One safety expert, Island EMS, says that despite the speed restriction on Prince Edward Island, he's not signed in on it. "It's not signed in on it," says Bill Macdonald, PEI's representative of the paramedics union. "We're not doing great here people heading to the hospital."

Drive up to 100km/h on a single track.

Your words Delivered

News Media



Charlottetown Area Office, 100 Capital Drive, Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1E7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010

### PEI Paramedics (CUPE Local 3324) Will Meet with Minister Bertram to Discuss Speed Cap Policy this Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.

**Charlottetown** – "The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3324 is pleased to report that the Minister of Health & Wellness, Carolyn Bertram, has agreed to meet with our representatives to discuss our concerns regarding the speed cap policy implemented recently by Island EMS Inc.," says Bill Macdonald, CUPE National Representative.

CUPE represents approximately 100 Paramedics across Prince Edward Island working for Island EMS Inc. This policy prevents ambulances (with lights and sirens on), from travelling more than 10 kms over the speed limit, where the limit is 50 kms or less (and only two lanes of traffic), and only 20 kms over the speed limit, to a maximum of 120 kms/hr, when travelling on the highway.

"The Island EMS Policy, in our view, dangerously restricts Paramedic employees - members of CUPE Local 3324 - in their ability to respond quickly and safely to medical emergencies for Prince Edward Islanders. Furthermore, this policy completely removes all professional discretion from the hands of our trained Paramedics. The Employer suggests that there is some safety reason for implementing this speed restriction on ambulances. Yet against our best efforts, we could not find,



The Guardian

Speed limit rules for paramedics dont apply to police, firefighters

Published on March 23rd, 2010  
Wesley Hildesheim

Topic: Charlottetown Police Services, Charlottetown Police, Summerside, Grenville Street

We can help. A Parent's Guide to Raising Money-Smart Kids.

THE SUN TIMES

News Sports Special Sections Business

Archives

News / Archive / P.E.I. paramedics told to slow down by employer

By SHL 02/23/10  
Printed 1:00pm Sat

Paramedics in Prince Edward Island are being told to slow down or risk discipline action from their employer, Island EMS Inc. But paramedics argue that the new speed limits put patient safety and lives at risk.

"In the real world of emergency response, there is no cookie-cutter scenario for emergencies, medical or otherwise," said Bill Macdonald for CUPE Local 3324.

The new speed policy restricts ambulances from driving more than 10 km/h over the speed limit where the limit is 50



**N.B. paramedics get latitude to speed**

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**Put trust in paramedics**

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**Speed policy restricts paramedics' emergency response, CUPE says**

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**The Arbitration Decision**

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**The Arbitration Decision**

"We accept that paramedics are highly motivated, highly skilled and highly professional workers, and that they have a real interest in doing their job to the highest standards. However, this policy change was not imposed to "benefit" the Employer, (except to diminish the possibility of accidents and the consequential liability and other costs), or to somehow restrict the rights of the affected workers.

The Employer has determined, legitimately in our view, that the two (2) percent of patients will not be significantly affected by the change, and that the change will improve the safety of all concerned. While ambulance operators have lost the discretion to drive at whatever speed they deem appropriate in the circumstances, when considering the risk of injury to themselves, the clients as well as the public, the balance, in our view, weighs in favor of the policy being found to be reasonable"

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**Solution?**

- Better Communication to stakeholders, staff and members of the public
- Education on the risks of vehicle safety
- System Solutions not just policies
- Time – remember when this was normal?

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