

TRB EMS Subcommittee ANB10(5)

EMS Safety Summit 2012

Safety Systems, Strategies and Solutions

Implementing New Policies

Matt Crossman, Medavie, PE Island EMS

February 29th , 2012



TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
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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

Last Updated: Monday, February 22, 2010 | 7:07 AM AT CBC News

The union that represents P.E.I. paramedics is upset with a new rule that restricts the speed of ambulances in the Maritimes.

Island EMS introduced the change in November, but the union says it's not working.

Even with sirens blaring, P.E.I. ambulances have to watch their speed. Island EMS first introduced a cap on how fast they can go four years ago, and the rule was revised again in November.

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

— Bill MacKinnon, CIIPF

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- Ambulance speed restrictions under review

"One hundred and 20 going down University Avenue is not safe," Craig

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Watch your speed, it's an emergency

Paramedics in P.E.I. can only go 10 km/h above the limit in town

by Rachel Mendleson on Thursday, April 1, 2010 9:00am - 1 Comment

✖ Watch your speed, it's an emergency

When responding to medical emergencies, paramedics say that exceeding the speed limit is just part of the job. But how fast is too fast? Citing safety concerns, Island EMS, the company that operates ambulances on Prince Edward Island, has tightened its cap on speeds—despite the fervent protestations of the paramedics union. “We’re not talking about these people wanting to be

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23rd, 2010

**PEI Paramedics (CUPE Local 3324)
Will Meet with Minister Bertram to Discuss Speed Cap Policy
this Thursday, March 25th 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 McKinnon, 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 60 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,

Archives

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

P.E.I. paramedics told to slow down by employer

By QMI AGENCY

Posted 2 years ago

Paramedics in Prince Edward Island are being told to slow down or risk disciplinary 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 McKinnon 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 60

The Guardian - Living - Travel

Article

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Speed limit rules for paramedics dont apply to police, firefighters

Published on February 26th, 2010
Wayne Thibodeau

Topics : [Charlottetown Police Services](#) , [Charlottetown Fire](#) , [Summerside](#) , [Granville Street](#)

P.E.I. paramedics may no longer be allowed to put the pedal to the metal but the same rules do not apply to police and firefighters.


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N.B. paramedics get latitude to speed



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Ambulance New Brunswick says it's giving its paramedics more discretion about whether to exceed speed limits when responding to the most urgent calls.

But its drivers will still be restricted to a maximum of 130 km/h, compared to the previous limit of 120 km/h.

"Our paramedics and their union have made it clear that they believe there is a case for allowing them to use more discretion and judgment when exceeding the current speed limits," Nagesh Jammula, director of finance and acting CEO of Ambulance New Brunswick stated in a news release late Tuesday.

"While we remain firm in our belief that exceeding the protocol is to be done only in the rarest of circumstances — and only when it can be clinically justified — we respect our paramedics' desires to do what they believe is right, keeping patient, public and partner safety in mind," he said.

The change follows a review requested by the provincial government about two weeks ago.

It also follows an alleged incident in the Sussex area last Thursday.



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The Journal Pioneer - Opinion - Letters to the Editor

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Put trust in paramedics

Published on August 4, 2011

Topics : RCMP , Prince Edward Island , Ontario , New York City

Editor,

Why do ambulances come with shiny, flashy lights and make loud noises? Why do the

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Speed policy restricts paramedics' emergency response, CUPE says

Published on February 22nd, 2010
Staff ~ The Guardian

Topics : [Island EMS](#) , [Islander](#)

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JOURNAL PIONEER
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A new speed policy implemented by the province dangerously restricts paramedics' ability to respond quickly and safely to emergency calls. Island EMS representative Bill McKinnon says the policy is a "disaster" for the province's paramedics.

CUPE represents approximately 1,000 paramedics across Prince Edward Island working for Island EMS Inc.

The policy prevents ambulances from travelling over the speed limit, when they are responding to an emergency. The policy also prevents ambulances from using their sirens and flashing lights when they are responding to an emergency.

CUPE had requested, in a letter to the province, that the province discuss this issue, but the province has refused to do so.

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The Journal Pioneer - Opinion - Letters to the Editor

Article

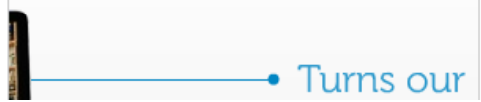
Put trust in paramedics

Published on August 4, 2011

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Editor,

Why do ambulances come with shiny, flashy lights and make loud noises? Why do the



The Arbitration Decision

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The Journal Pioneer - News - Local

Article

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Arbitration board refuses to put brakes on Island EMS speed policy

Published on August 2, 2011
Transcontinental Staff

Topics : [CUPE](#) , [Medavie EMS Group](#) , [The Guardian](#) , [New Brunswick, N.S.](#)

Paramedics in the province will have to continue following an Island EMS speed policy or face disciplinary action says, the president of CUPE local 3324



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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”

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?

