



Thomas J. Stickrath, Director
1970 West Broad Street
P.O. Box 182073
Columbus, Ohio 43218-2073



Emergency Medical Services
Richard N. Rucker, Executive Director
(614) 466-9447 • (800) 233-0785
www.ems.ohio.gov



James Davis, Chair
Mark Resanovich, Vice-Chair
Dr. Carol Cunningham, State Medical Director

Withdrawing Blood for OVI Evidence Collection

The EMS Board has received questions regarding whether an emergency medical technician (EMT) is authorized to withdraw blood for law enforcement purposes. Under current law, only the following individuals are authorized to withdraw blood for the purpose of determining its drug or alcohol content: a physician, a registered nurse, or a qualified technician, chemist, or phlebotomist. The question raised with the EMS Board has been whether an EMT is considered a “qualified technician” and therefore authorized to perform such blood draws.

The EMS Board has determined that an EMT does not appear to be a “qualified technician” for the purpose of withdrawing blood pursuant to a law enforcement matter. The certification provided to EMTs permits the performance of emergency medical services as set forth in Sections 4765.01, 4765.37, 4765.38, and 4765.39 of the Ohio Revised Code. The performance of withdrawing blood for the purpose of evidence collection does not constitute an “emergency medical service” as defined in the aforementioned laws and is not an element of emergency care. Therefore, the EMS Board has deemed that the performance of withdrawing blood for the purpose of evidence collection falls outside of the Ohio EMS scope of practice and would not qualify as an authorized emergency medical service performed in the role of an EMS provider.

Carol A. Cunningham, M.D., FACEP, FAAEM
State Medical Director
Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of EMS

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Mission Statement

“To promote quality and professionalism in the hiring, training, education, and delivery of fire and Emergency Medical Services with equal consideration given to all diverse populations and constituents.”