



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600

April 20, 2015

ALTSA: ALF #2015-005  
USE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

**This supersedes ADSA: BH #2010-010 – Use of Emergency Medical Services.**

The purpose of this letter is to remind you of relevant state laws and rules pertaining to your responsibilities related to residents, their medical issues, and the use of the local fire department / emergency medical services (EMS) or "9-1-1". Please remember that you are required to have sufficient and trained staff at all times to respond to resident needs, including medical emergencies. Applicable sections in Chapter 388-78A WAC – Assisted Living Facility Licensing Rules, include 2050, 2090, 2140, 2450, and 2600.

**You should only call 9-1-1 when the resident:**

- Has an acute/serious, life-threatening medical condition or complaint;
- Is medically unstable; or
- Has an immediate health risk.

**Do not call 9-1-1 when the resident's condition is:**

- Medically stable; or
- Non-acute or not serious.

Facilities that choose to admit or retain a resident with a risk of falling must have systems in place and available staff that are able to respond to non-emergent falls without calling 9-1-1. This includes evaluating the resident's condition after a fall and assisting the resident back to the pre-fall position, if there are no signs of injuries.

This letter does not mean that you should never call 9-1-1. When your evaluation of the resident shows that the resident may have a medical emergency, you should call 9-1-1. Enclosed is guidance to use when calling 9-1-1.

If you have questions about this topic and the licensing requirements, please contact your local Residential Care Services Field Manager. For additional guidance regarding medical emergency response in your facility, you may contact your local fire department or an EMS provider.

Sincerely,

Carl I. Walters II., Director  
Residential Care Services

"Transforming Lives"

Enclosure

**GUIDANCE FOR  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE & TRANSPORT REQUESTS**

<b>When Calling 9-1-1:</b>	<b>When EMS Arrives:</b>
<p>Be ready to relay the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your Name/Name of home</li> <li>• Address where help is needed</li> <li>• Call-back number</li> <li>• Resident information:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Age</li> <li>✓ Gender</li> <li>✓ Special medical complaint or problem: "Chest pain", "Shortness of breath", etc.</li> <li>✓ Medical history relevant to or potentially impacted by the current medical event</li> <li>✓ Any medical treatment provided and status change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Remember to call 9-1-1 again if conditions worsen.</p>	<p>Please be prepared to provide as much information as you can including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident age and gender</li> <li>• Details of medical complaint/problem</li> <li>• Level of consciousness</li> <li>• Vital signs</li> <li>• Medical history</li> <li>• Medications</li> <li>• Care provided: oxygen, ECG (Electrocardiogram), IV (Intravenous), medications, etc.</li> <li>• Plan and transport destination</li> <li>• Medical orders/directives</li> </ul>

This guidance includes information from King County Emergency Medical Services.