

August 3, 2021

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

July 13, 2021

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 21-070

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: EDUCATION-BASED DISCIPLINE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
TRAINING COMPONENT

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD or Department) is seeking approval from the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) for inclusion of a new component in the Education-Based Discipline (EBD) Program. Education-Based Discipline is being used as a substitute for all or part of the recommended discipline in cases where circumstances of a case meet the eligibility criteria for a settlement agreement. There are currently eight (8) courses approved for Education-Based Discipline. The Department is requesting the addition of an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) training component.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and approve the report.

DISCUSSION

When a member of the Los Angeles Fire Department has been found to have engaged in misconduct and is facing suspension or termination from duty, the member and the Department may enter into a settlement agreement if the LAFD determines that an alternative form of discipline will better serve the individual and the Department to modify an employee's behavior and maintain high standards of professionalism.

Education-Based Discipline is utilized to prevent the recurrence of misconduct by helping the member improve their skills and/or behavior. There are currently eight (8) approved courses which target problem areas and provide the members with tools to better approach conflict in the workplace, adversity on the job, and improve effective decision making.

Professional Standards Division staff members identified a gap in the list of approved EBD courses when the misconduct relates to EMS policy violations. Recently, there has been an increase in EMS policy violations which have led to LAFD members receiving various levels of discipline. There is no specific coursework identified in the current EBD policy which relates to EMS policy violations and improving performance in providing medical care and customer service.

The goal of EBD is to improve the member's behavior and performance, and to prevent the recurrence of misconduct. Courses assigned as part of the EBD program must closely match the misconduct in the discipline case and reflect the resources the member may need to effect change in their behavior. The addition of a training component and lesson plan development that addresses EMS policy violations is consistent with the goal of the EBD program and will support members in improving performance and prevent the recurrence of similar misconduct.

In the Department's proposed EMS training component, the member is required to develop a lesson plan for a training that specifically relates to the policy violation(s) in which they were charged. The lesson plan shall include the following components:

- Objectives
- Materials
- Procedure or Method
- Activity
- Reflection or Analysis

The lesson plan shall be submitted to the Commanding Officer of PSD within six (6) weeks of execution of the settlement agreement, for review and approval. Once the Commanding Officer of PSD reviews and approves the lesson plan, the member must provide the training, while on-duty, to their assigned platoon or special duty assignment.

The training must occur within 30 calendar days after the PSD Commanding Officer approves the lesson plan. The date of training must be identified on the F-957 (Company Activity Schedule) so that the on-duty Captain can ensure the training is completed on the scheduled date.

One of the following individuals must be present for the training:

- EMS Battalion Captain
- Nurse Educator
- EMS Bureau Staff Member

The Department met with the Office of the Independent Assessor and worked collaboratively to develop this proposed EBD EMS training component.

As part of the Settlement Agreement Policy, the Commanding Officer of PSD shall include the justification for assigning the member the chosen course/training. If allegations of misconduct related to EMS policy violations are sustained, EMS Training will be listed as an option for EBD.

CONCLUSION

The Department is requesting approval from the BOFC to include EMS Training as a component of education-based discipline in settlement agreements. The addition of EMS Training as a component of education-based discipline will help provide members with the tools to prevent the recurrence of misconduct, meet the goals of the Department and provide exceptional public safety and emergency services.

Board report prepared by Assistant Chief Kristina Kepner, and Chief Special Investigator Cynthia I. Hernandez, Professional Standards Division.