

Halton Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Statement of Information Practices

Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004

Halton Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide urgent medical care and transportation services to sick or injured individuals. In the course of providing these services, EMS will often collect personal health information. On November 1, 2004, specific rules relating to the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information began applying to the health sector through provincial privacy legislation titled the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA). PHIPA provides a comprehensive privacy protection framework that goes above and beyond the confidentiality requirements of the *Ambulance Act* of Ontario. It is the responsibility of the Director of EMS to ensure that the personal health information practices of the EMS Division are in compliance with PHIPA.

Individuals that have been in contact with Halton Region EMS have a right to know how their personal health information is collected, used and disclosed. Therefore, below are details relating to Halton Region EMS's information practices. Complete details about PHIPA can be obtained at one of the following websites:

- [Service Ontario e-laws](#)
- [The Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario](#)

This document replaces Halton Region's Personal Information Privacy Policy dated October 29, 2004 for the purposes of the written public statement requirement of section 16 of PHIPA.

Collection of Personal Health Information

Halton Region EMS attempts to collect information directly from affected individuals. However, in some situations individuals may be incapable or unable to provide their personal health information directly to EMS staff. In these situations, information may be collected from other sources in order to ensure appropriate and timely care. The types of personal health information collected about patients are generally limited to:

- name, address and date of birth;
- health card number; and
- facts about the situation being attended to, including health history and the type of health care provided.

Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that EMS staff only collects the information it needs about patients and that the information collected is kept confidential and secure. Further, Halton Region EMS recently implemented the Electronic Patient Care Report System (ePCR), a state-of-the-art computer application that assists paramedics in the confidential collection of patient health information. The ePCR has several built-in security safeguards and it replaces the previous paper-based Ambulance Call Report (ACR).

Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information

Personal health information is usually used and disclosed for the purpose of providing health care. Some of the more specific uses and disclosure of personal health information include:

- to provide treatment, assessment and intervention;
- to provide consumer health information and advice;
- to plan and deliver appropriate services;
- to maintain a record of treatment, and to manage and administer cases;
- to investigate and manage incidents; and
- to aid in research and statistical programs.

Consent

Halton Region EMS will rely on either express or implied consent for the use and disclosure of personal health information. For example, EMS relies on implied consent when sharing personal health information with other health care providers, such as hospitals. There are some situations where personal health information may be used or disclosed without consent, but these situations are limited to circumstances where legislation requires or permits such uses and disclosures (see [Frequently Asked Questions - PHIPA](#) for more details).

Individuals have the right to withdraw a previous consent they have given, or to change the conditions of consent. Withdrawing consent will protect information from most future uses or disclosures, but may affect the provision of health care. To withdraw or change conditions of consent, individuals should contact Halton Region EMS.

Access to and Correction of Personal Health Information

Under PHIPA, individuals have a right to request access to, or a correction of, their personal health information. Requests for personal health information maintained by Halton EMS need to be made formally (i.e. in writing, as described in the legislation). Formal access and correction requests can be submitted to the contact listed below.

It is important to note that access and correction requests can be denied, partially or fully, in limited circumstances (see [Frequently Asked Questions – PHIPA](#)) for more details.

Inquiries/complaints

Formal access and correction requests, or questions and concerns relating to access and correction requests, can be directed to:

Administrative Assistant to Manager of Operations
Halton Region Ambulance Services
1179 Bronte Road

Oakville, ON L6M 4G3
Telephone: Dial 311 or 905-825-6000
Toll Free: 1-866-4Halton (1-866-442-5866)
TTY: 905-827-9833
Fax: 905-825-9061

For further details regarding Halton EMS information practices or to discuss specific questions or concerns about the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information, individuals should contact:

Director of Emergency Medical Services
Halton Region Health Department
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, ON L6M 3L1
Telephone: Dial 311 or 905-825-6000
Toll Free: 1-866-4Halton (1-866-442-5866)
TTY: 905-827-9833
Fax: 905-825-9061

OR

Freedom of Information and Privacy Coordinator
Halton Region
Regional Clerk's Office
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, ON L6M 3L1
Telephone: Dial 311 or 905-825-6000
Toll Free: 1-866-4Halton (1-866-442-5866)
TTY: 905-827-9833
Fax: 905-825-8838

Individuals also have a right to formally complain about the collection, use or disclosure of their personal health information to the Information and Privacy Commissioner/ Ontario (IPC), which is an external oversight body. The IPC can be reached at:

2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400
Toronto, ON M4W 1A8
Telephone: Dial 311 or 416-326-3333
Toll Free: 1-800-387-0073
TCC/TTY: 416-325-7539
Fax: 416-325-9195
www.ipc.on.ca