



## CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 8/26/2025

ALL

Item Creation Date: 8/15/2025

HHD – Amendments to Chapter 4 of the Houston Code of Ordinances Relating to Ambulances

Agenda Item#: 65.

### **Summary:**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 4 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, HOUSTON, TEXAS, RELATING TO AMBULANCES, INCLUDING MOBILE STROKE UNITS; CONTAINING FINDINGS AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE FOREGOING SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

### **Background:**

The Director of the Houston Health Department (HHD), in collaboration with the Houston Fire Department (HFD), recommends City Council approval of an ordinance amending Chapter 4 of the Houston Code of Ordinances relating to ambulances. The proposed amendments ensure alignment with operational responsibilities of HHD and HFD and update references to reflect current statutory and regulatory requirements.

*Two major changes included in this amendment are:*

- Section 4-6: Deletes the outdated reference to the American College of Surgeons Essential Equipment for Ambulances (1970) and instead references Section 157.11 of the Texas Administrative Code and the HHD-approved Medical Equipment List.
- Section 4-9: Authorizes Mobile Stroke Units and other operators to provide emergency services under agreement with the City of Houston.

*Additional amendments are summarized as follows:*

- Section 4-1 (Definitions): Expands definitions to include "Mobile Stroke Unit (MSU)," defined as an ambulance equipped with specialized stroke treatment equipment, including laboratory and telemedicine capabilities used to administer emergency treatment before arrival at the hospital.
- Section 4-3 (City emergency ambulance driver's permit): Clarifies that applicants must hold a Class C Texas driver's license or an equivalent license issued by another state.
- Section 4-4 (Personnel required during operation of emergency ambulances): Requires a minimum of one certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on each ambulance; removes the requirement for a certificate of proficiency issued by the health officer.
- Section 4-5 (Structural and licensing requirements): Requires ambulances operating within the City to comply with Chapter 773 of the Texas Health and Safety Code and with updated HHD and HFD equipment standards.
- Section 4-6 (Required equipment): Removes outdated references and replaces them with current equipment requirements based on state regulations and HHD-approved standards.
- Section 4-9 (Persons authorized to engage in emergency ambulance service): While HFD remains the primary provider of emergency ambulance services, this section allows other operators, including Mobile Stroke Units, to operate under agreement with the City.
- Section 4-10 (General authorization): Removes outdated statutory references.
- Section 4-15 (Ambulance service operator's permit, insurance required): Updates insurance requirements to reflect current state law.
- Section 4-20 (Rules and regulations): Grants the Director authority to promulgate rules for implementation and enforcement of the ordinance.

These amendments were presented to the Quality of Life Committee on March 3, 2025.

HHD requests that City Council approve the proposed amendments to Chapter 4 of the Houston Code of Ordinances. These

amendments enhance the City's ability to effectively regulate ambulance operations and emergency medical services.

**Fiscal Note:**

No Fiscal note is required.

DocuSigned by:

*Stephen Williams*

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**Prior Council Action:**

N/A

**Amount and Source of Funding:**

N/A

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