

South Carolina EMS Data System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Data Submission and Participation Questions

1. Is the SC EMS Data System based on the old DHEC Form that has been in place the last several years?

No, the SC EMS Data System is based on the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) Version 2.2.1 dataset. The SC Division of EMS & Trauma through a Data Task Force have defined the NEMSIS data elements required to be electronically collected and submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application). This SC EMS Data System required data elements can be found at www.scemsdata.org.

2. If I participate in the SC EMS Data System will I need to continue sending paper Patient Care Report forms to DHEC?

No, The SC EMS Data System is the new DHEC data system. Once electronic data is being submitted to the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application), EMS Agencies can stop sending paper forms to DHEC.

3. If we are collecting information electronically, how do we capture and store signatures?

SC DHEC does not require signatures to be submitted into the SC EMS Data System. Signatures for medical orders outside of protocol, transfer of care, or other issues should be maintained as required locally.

4. Which EMS events are required to be electronically documented and submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application)?

The following EMS events **MUST** be documented electronically and submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application):

- * All EMS Patient Transports
- * All EMS Patient Assessments which do not result in an EMS Transport
- * All EMS Patient Assessments by credentialed First Responder Agencies that function at the EMT-Basic Level or above.

The following EMS events are **Recommended** to be documented electronically and submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application):

- * All EMS event dispatched by 911 with or without patient contact

5. I am a First Responder Agency licensed within South Carolina. Is my organization required to electronically document and submit data into the SC EMS Data System?

All Licensed South Carolina First Responder Agencies who provide services at the EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate and/or EMT-Paramedic level are required to electronically document and submit data into the SC EMS Data System.

Documentation must be done on all events as defined by FAQ #4.

6. Is every EMS Unit which cares for a single patient required to electronically complete a Patient Care Report and submit it into the the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application)?

No, if multiple EMS Units are involved in the care of a single patient, only one record summarizing the event is required. If one record summarizing the EMS patient care event is not created, each EMS Unit is required to complete an EMS Patient Care Report for the care that EMS Unit provided.

7. How can an EMS Agency collect and electronically submit data into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application)?

South Carolina EMS Agencies can electronically document and submit data into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application) through one of the following methods:

- * A NEMSIS Gold Compliant Commercial EMS Software
- * The PreMIS Web-Application

8. If I am using currently using commercial EMS software that is currently being used in North Carolina, will I automatically be able to send data into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application)?

No, if commercial EMS software is in use in North Carolina, it does confirm that the software can successfully send data into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application). However, each installation of the EMS software is unique to the EMS Agency and it must be validated to assure that it is configured to collect and electronically submit all of the EMS data elements required by the SC Division of EMS & Trauma. If you are currently using commercial EMS software, please contact the EMSPIC (919-843-0201 or www.scemsdata.org) to learn more about this testing and validation process.

9. What is the cost for an EMS Agency to participate in the SC EMS Data System?

The cost to participate in the SC EMS Data System can be viewed from several perspectives:

- * If an EMS Agency chooses to use commercial EMS software, there will be costs associated with purchase, computer resources, training, implementation, and ongoing maintenance associated with the use the software.
- * If an EMS Agency chooses to use the PreMIS web application, there is no cost for the software, implementation, or ongoing maintenance. There will still likely

be and EMS Agency cost for computer resources and the EMS Agency personnel time for training.

10. What computer resources are required to use the PreMIS Web Application as the EMS Agencies method to electronically collect and submit data into the SC EMS Data System?

The PreMIS Web Application requires a computer connected to the Internet. This Internet connection should be high-speed (non-dialup). The EMS Agency will need computers to be accessible to all of their EMS Units so that the Patient Care Report can be completed before the end of the crews shift. The implementation and location of the computers are based on the EMS Agency configuration. Often computers are located at the EMS stations and/or hospitals where patients are transported.

11. How often must EMS events be submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application)?

EMS Data must be electronically collected and submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application) within 24 hours of the event. Each EMS Unit's crew should complete all Patient Care Reports before the end of the shift.

12. Can an EMS Patient Care Report that has been electronically submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application) be changed after it has been submitted?

Yes, any Patient Care Report submitted into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application) can be updated by the EMS Agency through their commercial EMS software and then resubmitted. The most recent Patient Care Report received is considered the final Patient Care Report. EMS Agencies using commercial EMS software should configure the software to electronically submit any Patient Care Report to the SC EMS Data System that has been completed or changed. This will assure the SC EMS Data System has the most complete information on each Patient Care Report and also allows EMS Supervisors and Quality Management staff to review the Patient Care Reports over time while still meeting the 24 hour data submission requirement.

If an EMS Agency is collecting and submitting data into the SC EMS Data System using the PreMIS Web Application, the Patient Care Report can be edited (if the EMS Agency allows) through the PreMIS interface.

13. What is the deadline for all SC EMS Agencies to meet the SC DHEC regulatory requirement to submit data electronically into the SC EMS Data System?

All SC EMS Agencies must be collecting and submitting data electronically into the SC EMS Data System by December 31, 2009.

14. How is patient identifiable healthcare information stored and protected within the SC EMS Data System so that individual patients cannot be identified outside of DHEC?

- * All patient identifiable healthcare information is protected by SC law and is secured using the same information security and confidentiality requirements as outlined by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- * Any request to DHEC for patient level healthcare information will be forwarded to the local EMS Agency.

15. How is EMS Agency specific information stored and protected within the SC EMS Data System so that individual EMS Agency information cannot be identified outside of DHEC?

- * The identity of EMS Agencies with the PreMIS Application of the SC EMS Data System, when used in EMS reports, will be either de-identified or aggregated in such a way as to not identify the EMS Agency.
- * Any request to DHEC for specific EMS Agency information from the PreMIS Application of the SC EMS Data System will be referred to the local EMS Agency.
- * The identity and information associated with EMS Agencies within the Credentialing Information System (CIS) Application of the SC EMS Data System is considered regulatory in nature. Release of this information is based on DHEC Policy and Procedure.

16. How is data maintained within the SC EMS Data System to assure that it will not be stolen or hacked into?

- * The SC EMS Data System is maintained in a controlled physical environment with multiple layers of security.
- * No SC EMS Data is stored on any computer outside of the secured server environment.
- * IDs and passwords allow access to the data but all data transmission is encrypted and meets the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) security requirements.

17. What information from the SC EMS Data System is DHEC required to release under the Freedom of Information Act?

- * All Patient Care Report data maintained in the PreMIS Application of the SC EMS Data System is confidential and protected by SC law. Information can only be released through specific circumstances (not FOIA).
- * Any requests to DHEC for PreMIS Application data from the SC EMS Data System will be forwarded to the local EMS Agency.

18. How can information from the SC EMS Data System be obtained for research or peer reviewed publication?

Once the SC EMS Data System is completely populated, a data request procedure will be implemented to allow access to the information to those EMS Agencies and others interested in research and peer review publication. This procedure will include an approval process using an external Data Use Committee which will review all data requests to assure information from the SC EMS Data System is released/used appropriately.

19. Is SC EMS Data subject to subpoena?

- * Information from the CIS Application of the SC EMS Data System associated with the SC DHEC regulatory function may be subject to subpoena.
- * Patient care and EMS Agency information stored within PreMIS Application of the SC EMS Data System is not subject to subpoena.

20. How can an EMS Agency get information/reports from the SC EMS Data System PreMIS Application?

The SC EMS Data System provides 3 methods for reports to be generated by EMS Agencies:

- * PreMIS has many web-based reports which are available for use at any time.
- * The EMS Toolkits are very detailed reports that are available after an EMS Agency has submitted a minimum of 3 months of data.
- * Any EMS Agency using the SC EMS Data System may contact the EMSPIC (www.scemsdata.org) and request specific reports.

21. Is it possible to receive an exception, extension, or exemption from submitting EMS data into the SC EMS Data System?

Since the PreMIS Web Application is provided at no cost to all EMS Agencies and future Duke Endowment funding is contingent on having 100% participation in the SC EMS Data System by the end of 2009, no exceptions, extensions, or exemptions will be permitted.

22. What are the consequences if an EMS Agency fails to meet the SC DHEC regulatory requirement to submit data by the end of 2009

EMS Agencies who are not electronically submitting data into the SC EMS Data System (PreMIS Application) by the December 31, 2009 will be in violation of SC DHEC EMS Regulations. This could jeopardize the EMS Agencies licensure and potentially prohibit the EMS Agency from receiving state, federal, or other grant funds.

23. Will the SC DHEC 1050 forms (EMS Patient Care Report) continue to be available throughout this process?

Yes. It is the goal of SC Division of EMS & Trauma to provide as much support as possible to all EMS Agencies during this transition. The SC DHEC 1050 forms will no longer be available after December 31, 2009.