



# Clifton Park & Halfmoon Emergency Corps Inc.

P.O. Box 1469 • Clifton Park, N.Y. 12065 • (518) 371-3880 • Fax: (518) 371-7623



## Frequently Asked Ambulance Billing Questions

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### Question:

I thought the ambulance was volunteer, so why do you charge for your services?

### Answer:

While Clifton Park & Halfmoon Ambulance was started as an all-volunteer service in 1951, the modern demands of operating a 24 hour a day 365 day a year Advanced Life Support EMS system greater than 6000 calls annually necessitates the hiring of paid Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians to ensure proper staffing levels for the area it serve. Clifton Park & Halfmoon Ambulance operates as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization for the benefit of the Town of Halfmoon, Town of Clifton Park, and the City of Mechanicville

The NYS Emergency Medical Services Code Part 800.3.g states, "*Voluntary ambulance service means an ambulance service (i) operating not for financial profit and (ii) no part of the assets or income of which is distributable to, or enures to the benefit of, its members, directors or officers except to the extent permitted under Public Health Law article 30.*"

We bring emergency room skills and lifesaving interventions to your bedside or to the scene of an accident with advanced equipment and highly trained personnel in a prompt manor which comes at a significant cost. In order to offset our impact on taxpayers, we bill for services rendered just like your doctor's office or any medical facility.

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### Question:

If I pay for ambulance service on my property tax bill then (1) why do I still get billed for services, and (2) do I need to pay it?

### Answer:

#### (1) Why do I still get a bill?

The portion of your property tax levy that goes towards the ambulance service operation only covers 45.4% of the total operations cost for the budget year (2014). The remainder of the operating budget is made up by revenue recovered through billing for ambulance services provided. Unfortunately, are unable to recover 100% of the total cost of services strictly through billing of Medicare, Medicaid, Commercial Insurance and direct payment from patient. An example of the disparity between the cost of providing this indispensable service as compared to the revenue recovered by billing is seen by the from our 2014 accounting:

Total EMS requests responded to:	6027
Total number of patient transports completed (billable):	4680 (77.6% of requests)
Average cost per EMS request:	\$ 674.09
Average revenue recovered from each EMS request:	\$ 408.46 (60.6% of cost)
Property tax amount (example of a \$150,000 property):	Ranges from \$44 - 107 per year

As you can clearly see, the cost of providing a high quality ambulance service requires more than a modest annual tax levy. In addition, nearly 1 in 4 ambulance responses do not result in a billable transport, however the service was still necessary such as treatment without transport, standbys for community events, and assistance calls, etc...

**(2) Do I need to pay it?**

Quite simply , YES.

Without paying for ambulance service the availability of adequately trained staffed ambulance would decrease drastically, or could disappear completely.

Ambulance transport is covered under most insurance plans (please refer to your plan summary. Additionally, under Medicare guidelines, we must make every effort to collect all unpaid fees. This is to ensure a 'standard practice' of collection is in place, as opposed to showing favoritism to any specific individual.

However, we also understand that sometimes the patient or their family just cannot meet their obligations to pay this amount immediately due to financial hardship. With this in mind Clifton Park & Halfmoon Ambulance does offer a Charity Care program for those patients and families that earn less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. If you need assistance paying your ambulance bill, please contact the Director of Administration at (518) 371-3880 ext 113 for an application or payment arrangements.

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**Question:**

What may I expect to receive in the mail after my ambulance transport?

**Answer:**

- 1) You may receive an **Ambulance Assignment of Benefits form** that simply requires you to read, sign and return it to our billing company in Baldwinsville NY. This form is normally signed during your transport and simply allows us to bill your insurance company for your services. However sometimes it is necessary to send this form to you for signing after services are provided.
- 2) You may receive an **invoice/bill** for the total billed amount or copayment. Please submit payment of that amount, or contact us with any questions.
- 3) You may receive a **check for payment** direct from your insurance company. Since we submit a claim to your insurance company, they may send that the payment check directly to you. When this happens, you are to submit it back to us for payment. Failure to relinquish these insurance payments is considered insurance fraud and is illegal.

Your understanding and cooperation is greatly appreciated in responding appropriately to any of the above mailings.

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**Question:**

How do I pay my bill, and who do I contact if I have any questions

**Answer:**

To pay your ambulance bill or any portion of which is required by your insurance company, please remit payment along with the mailed invoice to:

Clifton Park & Halfmoon Emergency Corps, Inc.  
MultiMed Billing Services  
P.O. Box 535  
Baldwinsville, NY 13027

If you have any questions about your ambulance bill or amount due, please call:

Clifton Park & Halfmoon Emergency Corps, Inc.  
Director of Administration  
(518) 371-3880 x 113 or (800) 927-5845

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**Question:**

What fees are included in my ambulance service bill?

**Answer:**

Unlike doctor's offices or hospitals, ambulance services are prohibited from billing for each skill and item utilized during your ambulance transport. Therefore services are billed according to 3 major categories:

BLS – Basic Life Support which requires an Emergency Medical Technician for evaluation, treatment and transport for conditions that do not require advanced care as outlined in ALS1 or ALS2

ALS1 – Advanced Life Support 1 requires advanced evaluation skills and care provided a paramedic. Care such as heart monitoring (EKG), Starting or maintenance of intravenous lines (IVs) administration of medications.

ALS2 – Advanced Life Support 2 requires advanced evaluation skills and care provided a paramedic. Care such as cardiac treatment (defibrillation/electrical pacing), administration of multiple medications and advanced airway care such as a breathing tube (intubation).

In addition, a cost loaded mile is included. This is only from the point of patient care to the destination hospital.

**Question:**

How do you determine the ambulance billing rates?

**Answer:**

Our ambulance service rates are consistent with other services in this region and are approved by the municipalities we serve.

**Question:**

Who do I call with help or questions about my ambulance service bill or service in general?

**Answer:**

Please feel free to contact at our main station at:

Clifton Park & Halfmoon Ambulance  
15 Crossing Blvd.  
Clifton Park, NY 12065

Director of Administration  
(518) 371-3880 x 113