Ambulance Billing Frequently Asked Questions

1.) Whom can I call to discuss my ambulance bill?

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **prior to May 25, 2013**, please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov.

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **on or after to May 25, 2013**, please call our new billing vendor, **Digitech**, at:

Phone: 877-659-0481 (English) Phone: 877-659-0482 (Spanish)

Fax: 914-741-1325

Email: HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM

2.) Can I request a bill reduction?

Unfortunately, because the City of Houston is a government entity, we do not have the flexibility to reduce the amount you owe. The City's charges for EMS services are established by City Ordinance, passed by a majority vote of City Council. Further, the State of Texas Constitution, Article 3, Section 55 would prohibit the city from reducing your debt amount.

State of Texas Constitution: Article 3, Legislative Department, Section 55 – RELEASE OR EXTINGUISHMENT OF INDEBTEDNESS TO STATE, COUNTY, SUBDIVISION, OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. The Legislature shall have no power to release or extinguish, or to authorize the releasing or extinguishing, in whole or in part, the indebtedness, liability or obligation of any corporation or individual, to this State or to any county or defined subdivision thereof, or other municipal corporation therein, except delinquent taxes which have been due for a period of at least ten years.

(Amended Nov. 8, 1932.)

3.) Why am I receiving a bill if I did not call for an ambulance?

You will be billed if you were provided a service with a fee associated. You have the right to refuse treatment and transport.

4.) I received a bill for an ambulance transport, but I never used an ambulance. Can you update your records so I am no longer being billed?

We are sorry for the inconvenience. We would be happy to update the account so it does not reflect incorrect information. Please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov. We will have an EMS representative reach out to you within 2 business days.

5.) How can I pay my ambulance bill?

Payment can be made by check, money order and/or credit card by phone. At this time we do not offer payments online.

If you would like to mail in your payment, please include your account number and make checks payable to "City of Houston". Send payments to:

City of Houston EMS P.O. Box 4945 Houston, Texas 77210-4945

If you would like to pay by credit card over the phone, please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov. We will have an EMS representative reach out to you within 2 business days.

6.) Do you offer payment plans?

We offer you the option of paying your ambulance bill over a period of time. Please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov, and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you within 2 business days to discuss payment options.

7.) If my insurance paid, why am I still receiving a bill?

The City of Houston does not have in-network contracts with private health insurance companies; therefore we do not waive any unpaid portion of the bill.

8.) Why is my ambulance bill so high?

It is very costly for the City to respond to and transport patients in emergency situations. The rates are set by City Council and actually only represent a portion of the full cost of a response and transport.

9.) Where can I find fees for ambulance service?

Fees can be found here: http://cohweb.houstontx.gov/FIN FeeSchedule/

10.) I believe that my bill is wrong, it lists items that were not used (oxygen, medication, etc.), can you correct my bill?

We would be happy to discuss the charges on your bill. Please contact our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov, and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you with 2 business days.

11.) What happens if my check is not paid by my bank?

If your check bounces or for any reason is not honored by your bank, you will be charged by the payment processor. The fee is in addition to the amount you owe for the ambulance transport. The account will be subject to collection activity.

12.) I dispute the bill. Can I appeal this with the City?

If you have questions regarding the amount on your bill, you may discuss it with the City. Please contact our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov, and we will have an EMS representative reach out to you with 2 business days.

13.) How can an Attorney or Records company request a medical record and/or billing record?

Please use the following contact information for medical records requests:

City of Houston HFD 600 Jefferson, Suite 860 Houston, TX 77002

Phone: 832-394-6860 Fax: 832-394-6882

Please see the EMS billing records request information sheet after the frequently asked questions on how to request billing records. Note: All billing record requests must include a current patient medical authorization made out to City of Houston and payment must be included with the request. Failure to comply will result in a delay of your request.

14.) How do I obtain a billing record?

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **prior to May 25, 2013**, please leave a message with our 311 Help and Information Center (713-837-0311) or email **ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov**.

If you were transported by a City of Houston Fire Department ambulance to a hospital **on or after to May 25, 2013**, please call our new billing vendor, **Digitech**, at:

Phone: 877-659-0481 (English) Phone: 877-659-0482 (Spanish)

Fax: 914-741-1325

Email: HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM

15.) Why do you take two days to respond to many requests?

The City took the proactive measure of terminating our contract with our previous billing vendor, in part because of the customer service issues they caused. While we understand the frustration at our turnaround of some requests, we believe we are providing better handling of these bills, and we are striving to get better every day.

CITY OF HOUSTON Insurance Information and Signature Form

Instructions:

Please fill out the form below. Make sure to sign and date the form.

The completed form can be mailed in to:

City of Houston EMS P.O. Box 4945 Houston, Texas 77210-4945 (713)837-0311

(713)837-0311			
Or the completed form can be sca	anned and email to	o ems.customers	ervice@houstontx.gov
Patient Name:			<u> </u>
Patient Date of Transport:			<u> </u>
Patient Account Number (if k	known <u>):</u>		
Insurance Company Name		Insurance Company Address	
Insured's Name		Insured's Group / Policy #	
Insured's ID/Subscriber/Certification#	Insured's So	ocial Security #	Insured's Date of Birth
Patient's Relationship to the	Patient's Social Security #		Patient's Date of Birth
I authorize the submission of a claim to Medicare Emergency Medical Services (COH) now, in the understand that I am financially responsible for the coverage, and in some cases, may be responsible immediately remit to COH any payments that I repeated in the content of the cont	past, or in the future, une services and supplied for an amount in addecive directly from instruction. I authorize COH to direct any holder of fulling agents, the Centectors, as may be necest, or in the future. I also	until such time as I reves provided to me by odition to that which was urance or any source to appeal payment demedical, insurance, of Medicare and Nessary to determine the so authorize COH to constitution of the son authorize	oke this authorization in writing. I COH, regardless of my insurance is paid by my insurance. I agree to whatsoever for the services provided to whials or other adverse decisions on my illing or other relevant information about Medicaid Services, and/or any other payers ase or other benefits payable for any obtain medical, insurance, billing and other
Patient Signature			Date
Patient Name Pr	rinted		

CITY OF HOUSTON EMS Billing Records Request Information

(THIS PROCESS DOES NOT APPLY FOR PATIENTS REQUESTING THEIR OWN RECORDS)

To request records for ambulance transports that occurred **on or after May 25, 2013,** please contact the City of Houston's new EMS billing vendor, Digitech, at:

Phone (English): **877-659-0481** Phone (Spanish): **877-659-0482**

Fax: **914-741-1325**

Email: HOUS@DIGITECHCOMPUTER.COM

To request records for ambulance transports that occurred **before May 25, 2013**, please follow the instructions below:

- Billing records are \$11.00 per patient/date of service
- Other billing record documents requiring witness and notarization signatures:
 - Preparation of an affidavit: \$13.00 per document/per patient/date of service
 - Responses to Depositions on Written Questions: \$41.00 per document/per patient/date of service

All requests must include **Patient Medical Authorization**. Make checks payable to **City of Houston**.

All requests will be fulfilled within 30 days of receipt and released via mail only. Failure to comply with the above requirements will result in the return of your request.

Please return your request along with the **above noted payment**. Please mail your billing records request to:

City of Houston EMS PO Box 3347 Houston, TX 77002

For questions, call 713.837.0311 or email ems.customerservice@houstontx.gov.

<u>Please Note:</u> We do not prepare Medical Records at this location. Please use the following contact information for medical records requests:

1801 Smith St., Suite 860 Houston, TX 77002 Phone: 832-394-6860 Fax: 832-394-6882