TO: All Ambulance and First Response Services in Suffolk County

FROM: Robert Delagi, MA, NREMT-P
Chief, Prehospital Medical Operations and
Acting Director

DATE: June 6, 2012

RE: Extreme Temperatures and Medication/Fluid Maintenance

As we enter the summer season and anticipate days of high temperatures and humidity, we are taking this opportunity to remind ambulance and first response services of the need to maintain medication and fluid storage in areas that protect them from exposure to extremes in temperature.

According to NY State Department of Health Policy Statements 09-12 Storage and Integrity of Prehospital Medications and Intravenous Fluids, and 09-11 Storage and Safeguarding of Medications Administered by EMT-Bs, medications and fluids must be stored at temperatures that range from 59 degrees to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. Policy statements can be viewed by pasting http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/09-11.htm and http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/policy/09-12.htm into your browser.

While most ambulances are parked in climate-controlled firehouses and ambulance garages, first response vehicles and chief’s vehicles are typically parked outside, and sit idle for prolonged periods of time, making the medications and fluids stored in these vehicles susceptible to damage from excessive heat.

We encourage all ambulance and first response service managers to take appropriate precautions, such as moving medication bags indoors, during the daytime hours when the vehicle’s interior temperature is likely to exceed 77 degrees Fahrenheit.

Just a reminder, New York State Part 800.22 states that all ambulances must have the ability to keep the patient compartment temperature approximately 75 degrees Fahrenheit regardless of outside temperature.

Please don’t hesitate to call the EMS Division office (853-5800) if you have any questions or require any additional information.