



June 15, 2021

TO: Virginia Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies  
Regional EMS Councils

FROM: Ronald D. Passmore, NRP, TS-C  
Division Director – Regulation & Compliance Enforcement

SUBJECT: Guidance Document for OEMS required vehicle lettering & alternate lettering

**VEHICLE LETTERING with an ALTERNATE NAME**  
(reference 12VAC5-31-770 & 12VAC5-31-790)

Lettering must comply with the requirements and specifications listed in the *Virginia EMS Regulations 12VAC5-31*, which state in part:

- The name of the EMS agency that the vehicle is permitted to shall appear on both sides of the vehicle body in reflective lettering. Exception: A designated emergency response agency (DERA) must have the approval of the Office of EMS for a vehicle to display an alternate name.
- Lettering must appear in permanently affixed lettering that is a minimum of three (3) inches in height and of a color that contrasts with the surrounding vehicle background.
- The EMS agency name must appear in lettering larger than any optional lettering on an EMS vehicle, other than "Ambulance," the unit identification number or any lettering on the roof.
- Optional lettering, logos or emblems may not appear on an EMS vehicle in a manner that interferes with the public's ability to readily identify the EMS agency to which the EMS vehicle is permitted.
- A non-transport response vehicle with a primary purpose as a fire apparatus or law enforcement vehicle is not required to comply with the specifications for vehicle marking and lettering, provided the vehicle is appropriately marked and lettered to identify it as an authorized emergency vehicle.
  - *Passenger chassis vehicles (QRV style or administrative cars, pick-up trucks/vans) do not qualify as a fire apparatus*

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to EMS agencies for EMS vehicles that currently are not in compliance with lettering requirements in *Virginia EMS Regulations*.

1. Any OEMS permitted vehicle that is identified during an inspection that does not display the licensed agency name; the EMS agency will be afforded two years to re-mark the vehicle compliantly with the agency name as the most prominent name.
2. Any EMS permitted vehicle that is marked with an alternative name and also has the licensed agency name will be allowed to remain marked as is.
3. Any NEW EMS agency vehicle must be marked compliantly with the licensed EMS agency name as the most prominent name on the vehicle, unless the vehicle qualifies as a fire apparatus/law enforcement vehicle.