

**AN ORDINANCE
AMENDING CHAPTER 20, FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION, TO ADD
ARTICLE IV. – COST REIMBURSEMENT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL
TRANSPORT, TO THE CITY OF COVINGTON CODE OF ORDINANCES;
PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

WHEREAS, the Council for the City of Covington desires to amend Chapter 20, Fire Prevention and Protection, to add Article IV, “Cost Reimbursement for Emergency Medical Transport,” authorizing the City to charge reasonable fees for the use of emergency medical services vehicles, including charging insurers for ambulance services as authorized by section §§ 32.1-111.14 and 38.2-3407.9 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 (as amended); and

WHEREAS, the City Council has found that the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare deem it proper to do so;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Covington, Virginia that Chapter 20, Fire Prevention and Protection, is hereby amended and Article IV, Cost Reimbursement for Emergency Medical Transport, is hereby adopted as follows:

**ARTICLE IV. - COST REIMBURSEMENT FOR
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORT**

Sec. 20-110. - Service fees for emergency medical transport.

Reasonable fees shall be charged for emergency medical transport services provided by all emergency medical services personnel, whether provided by volunteer or city employees. The schedule of rates for services shall be established by resolution of the Council of the City of Covington. The funds received from the payment of these fees shall be paid into the general fund of the city to aid in defraying the cost of providing such service.

Sec. 20-111. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Ambulance means any vehicle, vessel, or aircraft, which holds a valid permit issued by the Office of Emergency Medical Services, that is specially constructed, equipped, maintained, and operated, and is intended to be used for emergency medical care and the transportation of patients who are sick, injured, wounded or otherwise incapacitated or helpless. The word “ambulance” may not appear on any vehicle, vessel, or aircraft that does not hold a valid permit.

Emergency medical services personnel means persons responsible for the direct provision of emergency medical services in a given medical emergency including all persons who could be described as attendants, attendant-in-charge, or operators.

Emergency medical transport services means services providing transportation in an "ambulance," accompanied by "emergency medical services personnel," as defined herein.

Primary coverage area means the area within the Covington Fire Department and Covington Rescue Squad "response boundaries" as set forth in the Covington Emergency Communications Standard Operating Procedures.

Resident means those persons that reside in the primary coverage area.

Sec. 20-112. - Billing.

(a) A bill will be generated for ambulance transports by all emergency medical services personnel whether the personnel are volunteers or city employees.

(b) Patients will fall into one of the following categories for billing purposes:

(1) *Insured, resident or non-resident.* The appropriate insurance carrier will be billed.

(2) *Uninsured residents.* The City of Covington Compassionate Billing Policy provides for waiver of emergency transport fees for eligible uninsured residents. A statement showing zero balance will be sent to any patient qualifying for such waiver.

(3) *Uninsured non-resident.* A bill will be sent to the patient transported. If the individual has the ability to pay, then payment is expected in full. If the patient can demonstrate financial hardship in accordance with the compassionate billing policy, they may qualify for waiver of fees.

(4) *Bill generated/no collection.* There are instances when a bill is generated in which the city would be merely transferring funds from one department budget to another to satisfy the bill. For example, when an on-duty city employee is transported for a compensable workers' compensation injury, the employee's department is responsible for payment of those expenses. In such instances, the City shall not be required to remit payment to the billing contractor. Instead, designated personnel will notify the city's billing contractor that the bill generated is internal to the city and the billing contractor will update its records to reflect such adjustment. Therefore, for accounting purposes, interdepartmental transfers (IDT's) will not be required when an internal bill is generated. In the event that the workers' compensation claim is denied, the employee's health insurance will be billed.

(5) *Inmates.* When an inmate of the regional jail is transported, the sheriff's department is responsible for the bill. The Commonwealth of Virginia will be billed for transports of state inmates in the judicial system. If federal prisoners are transported, the appropriate federal agency will be billed.

Sec. 20-113. - Compassionate billing policy.

(a) No one will ever be denied necessary medical transport service due to either his or her inability to pay or a lack of insurance.

(b) All consumers of ambulance services will be asked, in writing, to provide information

regarding available insurance coverage. All consumers of ambulance services will receive written notification of the value of services received and notice of billing forwarded to their insurer(s).

(c) Compassionate billing is intended to eliminate or minimize out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance services received by residents, and by non-residents, in the appropriate case, pursuant to subsection (f). The city regards taxes paid by residents in the primary coverage area inclusive of co-pays and/or deductibles for ambulance service for all persons living in a taxpaying household. Elderly or disabled residents qualifying for real estate tax relief pursuant to city ordinance shall also be deemed qualified for relief from any deductible or co-pay for ambulance services received.

(d) Any patient lacking health insurance may submit a waiver request form stating a financial hardship. The city manager, or his designee, will review requests for fee waivers and make a decision based on the circumstances set forth in the waiver request and evidence, if any, that the fees will endanger the financial health of the individual.

(e) The city's billing process or company will not pursue payment recovery through a debt collection agency without express authorization of the city manager or his designee.

(f) Nonresidents receiving city medical transport will receive a bill, but these nonresidents may also apply for financial hardship waiver.

(g) If any insured party requires EMS transport within a given calendar year that exceeds his or her policy limits and no additional insurance coverage is available, the fees for service beyond coverage limits will be waived.

(h) If the insurance company deems the transport is not medically necessary the billing company will verify the information that was submitted to the insurance company and resubmit the claim for reconsideration. If the insurance carrier still deems the transport not medically necessary, the city manager, or his designee, will review the individual case for possible waiver of the fees.

(i) City volunteer fire and rescue personnel, whether they are residents or not, will not be charged out-of-pocket expenses for ambulance services.

Sec. 20-114. - Billing and collections.

Billing and collection services will be provided by a billing contractor. No city emergency medical personnel, whether volunteer or city employee will accept or receive payment on behalf of a patient. Any inquiries regarding billing or collection procedure will be referred to the billing contractor, the city manager, or his/her designee.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDINANCE:

This ordinance shall be effective upon passage on second reading.

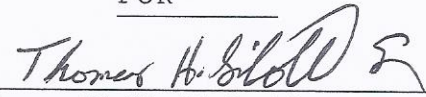
ADOPTED BY AFFIRMATIVE VOTES OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON,
VIRGINIA ON TWO READINGS, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FOLLOWING RECORDED VOTES:

FIRST READING: 12/11/12 VOTE: 5 FOR; 0 AGAINST

Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr.	FOR _____
V. Mayor William B. Zimmerman, Jr.	FOR _____
Stephanie R. Clark	FOR _____
David S. Crosier	FOR _____
Kim L. Warlitner	FOR _____

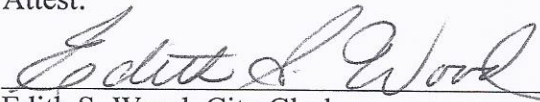
SECOND READING: 1/8/13 VOTE: 5 FOR; 0 AGAINST

Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr.	FOR _____
V. Mayor William B. Zimmerman, Jr.	FOR _____
Stephanie R. Clark	FOR _____
Davis S. Crosier	FOR _____
Kim L. Warlitner	FOR _____



 Thomas H. Sibold, Jr., Mayor

Attest:



 Edith S. Wood, City Clerk