CHAPTER ___ EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY

Pursuant to NCGS 153A, and other applicable law, Caldwell County hereby establishes these Ordinances for the operation of emergency medical services within its jurisdiction.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

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

Ambulance means any publicly or privately owned vehicle which is specifically designed, constructed, or modified, and equipped, and is intended to be used, maintained, or operated for, transportation, of people who are sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated.

Ambulance Advisory Committee means a committee which consists of the Caldwell County Office of Emergency Services Director, by virtue of position, and four members, who are appointed by the Board: two members in the healthcare field, and two members with EMS knowledge.

Ambulance Service means any publicly or privately owned enterprise engaged in the transportation of patients of emergency and nonemergency status to medical facilities.

Backup Ambulance Service means the system periodically staffed with personnel and equipment meeting the same criteria as Ambulance Service, which may be dispatched when the Ambulance Service is unavailable to respond.

Board means the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners.

County means Caldwell County, North Carolina.

Department means the NC Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), which is regulated by the health service regulation assistance, a division of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Dispatcher means an emergency telecommunicator who has completed an educational and/or training program approved by the employing agency and is credentialed by the agency, who dispatches emergency services and advises the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office, emergency medical personnel, and some police and fire departments, of any existing or threatened emergencies. The Caldwell County 911 Communication Center serves as the primary Public-Safety

Answering Point (PSAP), Lenior Police Department serves as the backup, and Burke and Catawba Counties serve as secondary PSAPs.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) means services rendered by emergency medical services personnel responding to improve the health and wellness of the community and addresses people's needs for emergency medical care within the scope of practice as defined by the North Carolina Medical Board, in accordance with State Law to prevent loss of life or further aggravation of physiological or psychological illness or injury.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) means an individual who is credentialed by the Department.

Emergency Medical Technician-Advanced (EMT-A) means an individual who has been credentialed as an Emergency Medical Technician-Advanced by the Department.

Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic (EMT-P) means an individual who has been credentialed as an Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic by the Department.

Emergency Services Personnel means Dispatcher, EMT, EMT-A, EMT-P, emergency medical services instructor, or Medical Responder.

EMS Provider means a firm, a corporation, or association which engages in Emergency Medical Services within the rules and regulations of the Department.

First Responder means the first dispatched medical or rescue aid to arrive at the scene and provide emergency medical assistance to stabilize a Patient while waiting for further medical aid and/or transport.

Franchise means a permit issued by the Board to a corporation or other legal entity for the operation of an Ambulance Service.

Franchisee means any corporation or other legal entity having been issued a franchise by the Board for the operation of an Ambulance Service.

License means any driver's license or permit to operate a motor vehicle issued under or granted by State Law.

Medical Responder means an individual who has been credentialed as a medical responder by the Department.

NCGS means the North Carolina General Statutes.

Nonemergency Transportation Service means the operation of an Ambulance for any purpose other than an emergency.

Office of Emergency Services means the County's office of emergency services. The emergency services director serves as the department director and the department's mission is to develop and maintain a comprehensive emergency management program to reduce or eliminate the vulnerability of citizens to natural and/or manmade hazards and respond quickly and appropriately to emergencies.

Operator means a person in actual physical control of an Ambulance in motion or has the engine running.

Owner means a person or legal entity, authorized to do business in the State by the Secretary of State or is a political subdivision of the State, which owns and operates an Ambulance Service.

Patient means an individual who is sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated and needs medical assistance.

Person means any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation, or organization of any kind, including any government agency other than the United States.

Rescue means situations where the victim cannot escape an area through the normal exit or under their own power.

State means the State of North Carolina.

State Law means the laws, regulations, and rules of North Carolina.

SECTION 3: INSPECTIONS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE

The County may inspect a Franchisee's records, premises, and equipment at any time to ensure compliance with this Chapter and any Franchise granted under this Chapter. Any Franchisee shall also comply with any inspections requested by a state or federal agency.

SECTION 4: PERMITS, CERTIFICATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

(a) No Person shall furnish, operate, conduct, maintain, advertise, or otherwise be engaged in or profess to be engaged in the business or service of emergency and/or nonemergency transportation of Patients within the County unless the Person holds a valid permit for each Ambulance used in such business or service issued by the Department and has been granted a

Franchise for the operation of such business or service by the Board pursuant to this Chapter.

(b) No person shall drive an Ambulance, attend to a Patient in one, or permit one to be operated when transporting a Patient within the County unless they hold a current, valid certification issued by the State.

(c) No Franchise is required for:

1. An entity rendering assistance to a franchised Ambulance Service, upon request, when the services franchised by the Board are insufficient or unable to cope, in the event of a major catastrophe or emergency.

2. An entity operating from a location or headquarters outside the County which passes through the County for the purpose of transporting Patients from outside the County to facilities outside the County, or transporting Patients picked up outside the County to facilities within the County. No such entity shall pick up Patients within the County for transporting to locations within the County, or other locations, unless the entity is rendering County authorized assistance.

SECTION 5: APPLICATION

Application for a Franchise to operate an Ambulance Service in the County must be made upon County forms and shall include:

(a) The legal name and address of the applicant and the owner of the Ambulance Service, including registration, and authorization to do business in NC, as determined by the NC Secretary of State's office.

(b) The trade or other fictitious names, if any, under which the applicant does business, along with a certified copy, filed with the Caldwell County Register of Deed's Office, of an assumed name certificate.

(c) A resume of the training and experience of the applicant in the transportation and medical care of patients.

(d) A description and copy of state certification for each Ambulance owned and operated by the applicant.

(e) The location and description of the places from which the applicant intends to operate.

(f) An audited financial statement of the applicant as it pertains to the operations in the County, if requested by the County. The financial statement must include all details required by the County.

(g) A full description of the type and level of service to be provided, including the location of the places from where the applicant intends to operate, the process for obtaining assistance, and how the vehicles will be dispatched.

(h) Any other information the County deems necessary for a fair determination of the capability of the applicant to provide Ambulance Service in the County in accordance with State Law and this Chapter.

(i) A full description of how each component listed in the North Carolina Administrative Code is being accomplished.

SECTION 6: GRANTING

(a) Prior to accepting applications for the Franchise to operate Ambulances in the County, the Board may designate specific service areas of franchise districts. The districts will be established using criteria which include geographic size, road access, the location of existing medical transportation services, population, and response time. The Board has the authority to establish, rearrange, or dissolve districts at any time, at its discretion, in accordance with State Law.

(b) An applicant may apply for a Franchise to operate emergency transportation, nonemergency transportation, rescue, or first responder services. Each type of service requires a separate application. If more than one type of service is to be provided, separate applications must be filed for each type. The Board has sole discretion to require an applicant to operate some or all the services, regardless of the services the applicant offered within the application.

(c) Upon receipt of an application for a Franchise, the Board will schedule a time and place for hearing the applicant(s).

(d) A Franchise may be granted if the Board finds:

1. Public convenience and necessity require the proposed Ambulance Service and a need exists for the proposed service to improve the level of Ambulance Service available to residents of the County, and the Franchise is a reasonable and cost-effective manner to meet the need.

2. Each Ambulance of the applicant is permitted by OEMS.

3. Only State credentialed EMTs, EMT-As, and EMT-Ps are employed to provide Ambulance Service.

SECTION 7: TERM SUSPENSION, REVOCATION OR TERMINATION

(a) A Franchise issued pursuant to this Chapter is valid for a term to be determined by the Board, provided either party, at its option, and without cause, may terminate the franchise upon six months prior written notice to the other party subject to the terms of a contract. After a notice of service termination is given, the Ambulance Service must reapply for a Franchise if continued service is desired.

(b) Upon suspension, revocation or termination of a Franchise granted pursuant to this Chapter, the franchised Ambulance Service shall immediately cease operations. Upon suspension, revocation, or termination of EMT, EMT-A, or EMT-P's credentials or driver's license, such person shall immediately cease to drive an Ambulance or provide medical care.

SECTION 8: STANDARDS GENERALLY

(a) Each franchised Ambulance Service shall always comply with the requirements of this Chapter, the terms of the Franchise agreement granted pursuant to this Chapter, the health, sanitation, safety, equipment and Ambulance design, and local and State Law.

(b) Assignment of a Franchise permit or agreement is prohibited unless approved by the Board in writing in advance of such assignment.

SECTION 9: STANDARDS FOR VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

At all times vehicles and equipment shall be maintained and in compliance as required by State Law and permitted by the Department.

SECTION 10: STANDARDS FOR COMMUNICATIONS

(a) Each Ambulance or rescue vehicle designed for on-road use must be equipped with an operational 2-way radio capable of establishing good quality voice communications from within the geographic confines of the County to each hospital(s) emergency department in the County in which the Ambulance is based, all hospital emergency departments to which transportation of patients is made on a regular or routine basis anywhere in the state, and to the emergency services dispatching agencies within the County.

(b) Each Franchisee must maintain current authorizations of FCC licenses for all frequencies, equipment, and radio transmitters it operates. Copies of all authorizations and licenses must be on display and available for inspection according to FCC rules and regulations.

(c) Each base of operations must have at least one telephone landline and telephone numbers registered with each law enforcement agency and communications center in the County.

(d) Nonemergency transportation service may be dispatched by the County dispatch center or in any manner approved by the Board.

SECTION 11: INSURANCE

(a) No Ambulance Franchise shall be issued under this Chapter, nor shall such Franchise be valid after issuance, nor shall any Ambulance be operated in the County unless there is, at all times, in full force and effect occurrence-based insurance coverage issued by an insurance company licensed to do business in North Carolina, for each and every Ambulance owned and/or operated by or for the Ambulance Service providing for the payment of damages as follows:

1. Commercial general liability, medical professional liability, employment practices liability, and errors and omissions. For each respective policy, coverage shall extend to all EMTs, EMT-As, EMT-Ps, first responders, medical director(s), assistant medical directors, and all staff of the Ambulance Service franchise and include minimum limits of $2,000,000 per occurrence with a $4,000,000 annual policy aggregate.

2. Business auto coverage with a minimum limit of $2,000,000 with a combined single limit for bodily injury liability and property damage liability. This coverage shall include owned vehicles, hired non-owned vehicles, and employee non-owned vehicle.

3. Management or directors' and officers' liability coverage shall include at least minimum limits of $1,000,000 per claim and a $2,000,000 aggregate.

4. Umbrella liability coverage shall include at least a minimum limit of $3,000,000 per occurrence. Coverage shall be in excess over the underlying business auto coverage, commercial general liability coverage, and employers' liability coverage.

5. Workers' compensation coverage shall extend to all paid and volunteer members as required by law, and in amounts required by State Law.

(b) A franchisee must annually supply a certificate of insurance for all requirements contained within this Section. Additionally, Franchisee must immediately notify the Board if Franchisee's insurance lapses, or is otherwise suspended, voided, canceled, or reduced in coverage or in limits for any reason.

(c) A franchisee shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the County for everything under this Chapter.

(d) A franchisee must name the County as an additional insured on a primary basis for all policies required in this Chapter. Waiver of Subrogation shall be issued in favor of the County with respect to all policies as required by this Chapter.

(e) A franchisee's insurance shall be considered primary for losses which occur as a direct result of actions attributable to Franchisee. Further, Franchisee's insurance shall cover the County for any liability arising out of the activities performed by or on behalf of Franchisee, including products or completed operations of Franchisee; or automobiles owned, leased, hired, or borrowed by Franchisee. This coverage cannot contain any special limitations as to the scope of the protection afforded to the County, its elected officials, officials, officers, employees, agents, or volunteers.

(f) Any insurance maintained by the County shall be in excess of the Franchisee's insurance.

(g) Failure to comply with any portion of this Section may result in immediate termination of the Franchise upon written notice to the Franchisee by the County.

SECTION 12: FRANCHISE RECORDS

Each Ambulance Franchisee shall maintain the following records:

(a) Record of dispatch. Records shall show the time a call was received, time personnel dispatched, time arrived on scene, time arrived at destination, time in service, and time returned to base.

(b) Trip record. The trip record must provide the Patient with a copy containing all required information. A copy of the trip record may serve as a receipt for any charges paid.

(c) Biweekly checklists. There shall be a minimum of biweekly driver and attendant checklists of contents and equipment of each vehicle and organization signed by the individuals verifying vehicle operation and equipment.

SECTION 13: RATES AND CHARGES

(a) Each Franchisee must submit a schedule of rates to the Board for approval and shall not charge more or less than the approved rates without prior written authorization of the Board.

(b) No Ambulance Service shall attempt to collect rates on calls for service until the Patient:

1. Has reached the point of destination, received medical attention and is in a condition, deemed by the physician, fit to consult with the Ambulance Service. The Ambulance Service may attempt to secure guarantee of payment with the Patient's family or guardian once the Patient is in the process of receiving medical attention; or

2. Refuses to be transported to a medical facility to receive additional medical attention after the Patient received medical attention from the Ambulance Service.

(c) A Patient may be required to pay for transportation to a nonemergency facility in advance of the Ambulance trip only for nonmedically necessary transports.

SECTION 14: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MUTUAL AID

(a) To promote and improve safety, the County uses emergency medical services from other jurisdictions when possible.

(b) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to require the County or its departments or agents to be responsible for the payment or collection of emergency medical services provided within any other county other than the County, except a county requesting mutual aid in a disaster should make provisions to reimburse the County, expenses incurred, as a result of the disaster response.

(c) The County must authorize mutual aid to surrounding counties for the use of the County gas pumps for emergency vehicles coming through the County when private gas stations are closed. The County shall be reimbursed for such costs.

SECTION 15: PENALTIES

Any Person violating a provision of this Chapter shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than $500.00, or imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or both. Each day a violation continues, after the offender has been notified of the violation, shall constitute a separate occurrence. A third conviction within a 5-year period shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor, with a maximum penalty of 120 days in jail and a discretionary fine, as provided by law. Each 30 days of continued violation shall be considered a separate offense.