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**Background:** TR309.18(1) requires that each ambulance shall have a permanently mounted radio in the cab of the ambulance capable of contacting the hospital emergency department of the hospital it serves. In the rear compartment of the ambulance there shall be two-way communications in the form of a radio capable of communication with the hospitals it serves.

**Variance Request:** A variance request was submitted to the Division of State Patrol (DSP) by the Systems Management & Development Committee of the Wisconsin EMS board asking if it would be permissible to remove radios from ambulances when the health care facility no longer uses radios as communication devices.

**Guidance:** The Division of State Patrol in agreement with the Division of Public Health, approve this variance with the following requirements:

- Two-way radios are not required to be installed in the rear compartment of the ambulance if there isn't "end" communication with a health care facility, primary hospital, receiving hospital, or EMS professional and there is another means for timely and accurate information to be shared, generally by cellular communication.
- Each ambulance is still required to have a radio installed in the cab to maintain a communication system that allows communication between medical control and EMS professionals and complies with the Wisconsin Emergency Medical Plan. The current Wisconsin Emergency Medical Communications Plan does require ambulance services to be able to have radios capable of communicating on the EMS B (155.340), EMS A (155.400), MARC 1, and MARC 2, regardless of which technology system is used locally to ensure standardized communications in the event of a disaster or large-scale mutual aid incident.
- This variance does not affect any other current safety regulations in place within TR309.
- TR309.07(5) requires a copy of the variance to be carried in the ambulance at all times.
- If at any time, the health care facility resumes communication via radio communication, the ambulance service shall install radios as required by TR309.18(1).

Sincerely,

Mark Mandler  
Dept. of Health Services – EMS Section Manager

Captain Karl L. Mittelstadt  
Division of State Patrol – Motor Carrier Enforcement Section