



London Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## Procedure for Ambulance Observers

## DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

**Purpose of the document:** To ensure a standard approach when dealing with all requests/ invitations to observe on LAS vehicles.

**Sponsor Department:** Legal Services

**Author/Reviewer:** Head of Legal Services. To be reviewed by June 2011

**Document Status:** Final

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August 2007	2.0	Head of Legal Services	Appendix 1 amended and minor changes
23/05/08	2.1	Records Manager	Section 8 of appendix 2 added. Re-formatted
6/06/08	3.1	Head of Records Management	Minor changes requested by CGC 2/6/08
03/12/08	3.2	Head of Legal Services	Minor- Section 2.6 added. Appendix 3 amended to include reference to unemployed and student observers

**\*Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

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<b>Links to Related documents or references providing additional information</b>		
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TP/ 024	Managing Patient Confidentiality when Dealing with the Media	

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are not controlled nor substantive.

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## **Introduction**

This procedure relates to all requests from anyone seeking permission to undertake periods of observation on both Accident and Emergency and Patient Transport Services (PTS) vehicles.

Most requests to ride out with ambulance staff on a London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) vehicle generally come from student doctors, nurses and other healthcare agencies within the NHS including staff from LAS. Occasionally, MPs, local councillors, representatives from non-NHS or UK ambulance services, visitors from abroad, journalist and the media will request or be invited to ride out as an observer.

For the purpose of this procedure an 'ambulance observer' means; an authorised person suitably dressed who may accompany ambulance staff solely to observe operational activities and crew actions without interference or assisting in any way with patient care or treatment.

### **Objectives.**

1. To ensure a standard approach when dealing with all requests/ invitations to observe on LAS vehicles.
2. To ensure proper scrutiny for all such requests is undertaken and that appropriate paper work and indemnity where necessary, is confirmed in writing.

## **Procedure**

### **1.0 Who may ride out as an Ambulance Observer on an LAS vehicle**

- 1.1 As a general rule no one under the age of 18 years may go out as an ambulance observer on any LAS vehicle. The only exception to this rule is for students undertaking an appropriate training course (student nurses, GNVQ Health & Social Care, etc) who may observe on A&E vehicles providing their college agrees the undertaking in 2.4 below to provide indemnity for the negligence of the student.

### **2.0 Processing and authorising applications for Ambulance Observers.**

- 2.1 A person wishing to ride out as an observer will be referred to the appropriate Practice Learning Manager who will provide the necessary indemnity form.
- 2.2 In the case of an LAS employee whose service induction includes a period of time as an ambulance observer or where subsequently observer duties are arranged, it will not be necessary for them to sign indemnity forms.

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2.3 Whenever a third party wishes to accompany LAS staff on a vehicle, the Indemnity Form (LA123) Part A (see [Appendix 1](#)), and the Observers Guidance Notes, part B ([Appendix 2](#)) must be signed and returned to the LAS prior to the period of observation.

2.4 If the third party is employed by another NHS Trust, health authority or a student at university or College of Further Education pursuing a professional health qualification, the employing authority/ university/ College of Further Education must confirm on headed letter paper that the employing authority will accept liability for the negligence of their staff in the event of personal injury, injury to patients or LAS staff or damage to LAS property.

2.5 If the third party is not employed by a NHS Trust or health authority or is not a student at university or College of Further Education pursuing a professional health qualification, the third party must be asked to provide proof of public liability and employer liability insurance to the value of:

£2,000,000 - if they are employed by a private company or other public body,  
£5,000,000 - if they are employed by a public limited company.

2.6 If the third party is a student (not at a University or College of Further Education pursuing a professional health qualification) or an unemployed person, they will be eligible for indemnity under LAS's Public Liability policy with Travellers Insurance Company Ltd.

This policy has been extended to include such observers in respect of injury to third parties (including LAS employees and patients for the purposes of this cover) and damage to third party property (though not to LAS property)

The Limit of Indemnity under this Policy is £10,000,000 any one occurrence

2.7 Authorising applications and making final arrangements, such as name of crew time, date and place for the ambulance observer to report to accompany an A&E vehicle, will be undertaken in the first instance by AOM/DSO. PTS authorisation for an observer will be granted by a Contract Operation Manager or Site Manager. In the event of the AOM's absence, authorisation may be granted by DSO, HR Officer or Support Services Officer. In the event of the Contract Operation Manager or Site Manager's absence, authorisation may be granted by PTS Lead.

2.8 A copy of the signed indemnity form together with the proof of the insurance or letter from the NHS employer/ university or College of Further Education and other documents will be retained by the department facilitating the arrangement for a period of 4 years.

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2.9 Should any injury/ loss/ damage occur whilst the third party is accompanying LAS staff as an ambulance observer, an Accident/ Incident Reporting form LA 52 must be completed.

2.10 In any event an ambulance crew have the right and responsibility to terminate the 'ambulance observation' period at any time should they believe the observer has breached or compromised these guidelines to the detriment of patients and staff.

### **3.0 Inviting Politicians, VIPs, guests from abroad and the media as Ambulance Observers**

3.1 Occasionally, the LAS approaches individuals from external organisations to observe on a vehicle. It would be inappropriate for the service to expect indemnification from this group of people when this has been initiated by the LAS and clearly for the benefits of the service's own interests.

3.2 In these special circumstances, managers or officers of Assistant Director of Operations level or above may allow guests to observe on vehicles without the need to provide indemnity or insurance. The group of individuals that this is most likely to apply would be politicians, VIPs, visitors from abroad and, when the LAS has made the initial approach to the press/media.

3.3 This facility must not be used to short-cut the procedure in the event of a 'guest' requesting the facility of ambulance observing at short notice, because of not having sufficient time available or due to incomplete or incorrect documentation.

<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>	
<b>Intended Audience</b>	For all LAS staff
<b>Dissemination</b>	Available to all staff on the Pulse
<b>Communications</b>	Revised Procedure to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document
<b>Training</b>	
<b>Monitoring</b>	

**Indemnity Form**

1. In consideration of you allowing me to accompany and observe your employees, independent contractors or agents during the course of their duties with the London Ambulance Service I hereby irrevocably and unconditionally undertake as follows:
  - 1.1 to indemnify you and keep you indemnified from and against all actions, claims, demands, costs (including legal costs), losses and expenses which may be brought or made against you by any person or incurred by you arising directly or indirectly, wholly or partly out of any act or omission by me (including my negligence) when so accompanying any such person as aforesaid;
  - 1.2 not to hold you responsible or make any claim against you in respect of any loss, damage or injury arising as aforesaid unless I suffer personal injury or death arising out of your negligence.
  
2. I agree:
  - 2.1 I will keep confidential and not disclose any and all information relating to you, your staff, and any of your patients or any other third parties, which I acquire or receive during the course of activities referred to in paragraph 1 or otherwise;
  - 2.2 I will not film, photograph or record any of your patients or any other third party without first obtaining the verbal consent of such patient or third party;
  - 2.3 I will not film, photograph or record any of your staff without first obtaining the verbal consent of such staff;
  - 2.4 I will not film, photograph or record on private property without first obtaining the verbal consent of those persons responsible for the property;
  - 2.5 In the event that I film ,photograph or record during the course of activities referred to in paragraph 1 above, any material I obtain and which is subsequently used by me or any third party (including in and by the media) will not identify any individual without that person's prior written permission;
  - 2.6 You may terminate my activities referred to in paragraph 1 above at any time, if you consider this to be necessary for the purposes of carrying out your operations, or if I do not comply with any of my obligations under this Indemnity Form.

3. I agree that:
  - 3.1 The benefit of this undertaking shall extend not only to you but to your successors and assigns whether immediate or derivative and all and every one of your employees or agents whether now or hereafter in your employment and for this purpose I acknowledge that in respect of this undertaking you are acting on your own behalf and as agent for your employees and agents as aforesaid.
  - 3.2 Your rights pursuant to this undertaking are without prejudice to and in addition to any other rights or remedies provided by law and or statute for your benefit and the benefit of your employees and agents.
  - 3.3 You reserve the right to require from me at any time evidence of appropriate insurance cover or other evidence of my ability to meet my liabilities under this undertaking.
  - 3.4 If:
    - 3.5 a claim is made for which I am only obliged to provide a partial indemnity by virtue of the fact that any personal injury or death is partly caused by your negligence or;
    - 3.6 a claim is made in which legal proceedings are threatened or brought against you or against both you and me then you shall be entitled to be represented separately in respect of the conduct of any such claim or proceedings.
- 4 This undertaking shall be binding on my heirs, successors in title and personal representatives.
- 5 Any change in your constitution or your abolition or amalgamation with any other person or the acquisition of all or part of your undertaking by any other person shall not in any way prejudice or affect your rights hereunder.
- 6 This agreement shall be governed by and be construed in accordance with English Law and the parties hereby submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts.

DATED the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_

SIGNED by) \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 in the presence of \_\_\_\_\_ )

WITNESS:  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**London Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

Notes to be read and signed by any person wishing to accompany London Ambulance Service staff as an observer on a vehicle.

1. Due to the nature of the Ambulance Service it is difficult to predict the type of incident or locations that you will attend. With this in mind you should wear clothing that is practical and yet offers some protection from the elements etc. In particular you should wear footwear that offers protection to the feet and has a non-slip sole. In addition you will be required to wear a reflective tabard that clearly identifies you as an “observer” and appropriate safety equipment during the course of the shift.
2. At all times you must act under the instructions of the crew of the vehicle. This relates to your seating position in the vehicle and whilst at incidents or locations. Contravening these guidelines or instructions given by the crew may result in your observation period being terminated by the crew or authorising officer.
3. For your own safety, you should remain seated with seatbelt applied, whilst the vehicle is in motion and comply with the London Ambulance Service no smoking policy as well as other London Ambulance procedures and protocols
4. At the beginning of the period of observation you should acquaint yourself with the layout of the vehicle and the location of any safety equipment, fire extinguishers etc.
5. During the course of this period of observation you should not attempt to use any items of LAS equipment or offer any treatment to a patient unless asked to do so by the attendant / crew members.
6. You owe a duty of confidence to patients and must not, therefore, disclose any patient identifiable information about patients to a third party.
7. If for operational or patient care related reasons it is not possible to immediately convey you either from the scene of an incident to hospital or from hospital back to an Ambulance Station, the LAS will make every effort to do so, as soon as possible.
8. In the event of the crew being deployed to a known violent incident/ address, or a declared major incident the crew may request the observer to leave the vehicle at the nearest safe location.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Observers Details Form**

Name of Observer

Address

Age: if under 21  If over 21 years of age please enter 'over 21'

Sponsoring Organisation

If employed by another NHS Trust the following should be attached:

- Letter from Trust confirming that the employer will accept liability for the negligence of their staff (see 2.4 in procedure)
- Signed Indemnity Form (Form A)
- Signed Observers Notes (Form B)

If the Observer is not an employee of an NHS Trust the following should be attached:

- Copy of appropriate Insurance Certificate
- Signed Indemnity Form (Form A)
- Signed Observers Notes (Form B)

If the Observer is a student or unemployed the following should be attached:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Signed Observers Notes (Form B) |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|

Proposed date of observation

Station   
 Shift Time   
 Crew (Name or Call Sign)

For official use  
 Received:   
 Details Checked by

Authority is hereby given for the above named to accompany LAS Staff on the date/shift indicated above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_