



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of April 16, 2005**

**DATE:** April 1, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Adopt the change from the current Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulance transport fee structure and increase fees from a flat transport fee for residents and non-residents to a uniform fee based on services provided for an EMS ambulance transport.

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt the change from the current Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulance transport fee structure and increase fees from a flat transport fee for residents and non-residents to a uniform fee based on services provided for an EMS ambulance.

**ISSUE:** Whether to change the current ambulance transport fee structure and increase ambulance transport fees.

**SUMMARY:** The current ambulance transport fees, adopted in fiscal year 1999, charge residents one fee (\$225) and non-residents a higher fee (\$300). The EMS ambulance transport fee structure charges everyone the same transport fee and is tied to transport service levels. The new fees are as follows: \$300 for Basic Life Support Emergency (BLS Emergency), \$400 for Advanced Life Support-1 Emergency (ALS-1 Emergency), and \$550 for Advanced Life Support-2 Emergency (ALS-2 Emergency). All transports will also include a charge of \$7.50 per transport mile.

**BACKGROUND:** In light of the increased cost of providing EMS over the last several years and the fact that the ambulance transport fees have not been increased in seven years, a review of the current ambulance transport fees was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of an increase to help offset the Fire Department's increased operating costs. The review identified a trend in ambulance billing going away from a set fee for transport, which we currently have, to a fee schedule based on services provided for the ambulance transport. In addition, the review revealed that the current fees were significantly below the allowable charges by Medicare and that the County was losing a significant amount of revenue each year under the current fees.

**DISCUSSION:** Each level of EMS requires a greater degree of knowledge and skill. For example, a BLS Emergency transport provides basic services such as bleeding control, splinting fractures, and treatment for shock. An ALS-1 Emergency transport provides at least one ALS intervention such as cardiac EKG or the delivery of intravenous fluids. An ALS-2 Emergency transport provides such services as manual defibrillation, endotracheal intubation, and surgical

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Fire Chief James Schwartz, Tom Gardiner

airway. The new fee schedule reflects the County's goal of increasing revenue to help offset increased EMS costs while maintaining reasonable EMS charges and minimizing the financial impact on residents.

A comparison of ambulance transport fees for the Washington Metropolitan area is provided below.

**Comparison of Local Emergency Medical Service Transport Fees**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>BLS</b>	<b>ALS-1</b>	<b>ALS - 2</b>	<b>Charge Per Mile</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Arlington County	\$300	\$400	\$550	\$7.50	Proposed
Fairfax County	\$300	\$400	\$550	\$7.50	Effective 4/1/05
Washington, D. C.	\$268	\$471	\$471		Considering an increase
City of Alexandria	\$200	\$200	\$200		\$250 for non-resident
Prince George's County	\$0	\$200	\$200		
Montgomery County	\$0	\$0	\$0		\$350 flat fee proposed

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The changes in the transport fee structure and increased fees are projected to generate \$400,000 for the County.

**THE COUNTY BOARD HEREBY RESOLVES** that effective July 1, 2005, the service charge for ambulance transportation by the Arlington County Fire Department shall be \$300 for Basic Life Support Emergency, \$400 for Advanced Life Support-1 Emergency, \$550 for Advanced Life Support-2 Emergency, and \$7.50 per transport mile. The Fire Chief is authorized to establish regulations and procedures for the collection of these fees and associated direct costs for ambulance service, including payment standards for citizens with lower incomes.

The charge shall be waived in the following cases:

- a. When service is rendered in connection with any natural disaster or man-made disaster as defined in §44-146.16 of the Code of Virginia;
- b. When service is rendered to a person who is in the custody of the Sheriff's Department; and
- c. When service is rendered to any child under 18 years of age who is attending school or school-related activities when the need for service arises.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the local Board of Public Welfare shall pay all ambulance service charges not covered by insurance incurred by residents who at the time of service are enrolled in the Housing Grants or Real Estate Tax Relief Programs administered by the County pursuant to Chapters 43 and 44 of the Arlington County Code.