



Respecting the privacy of your personal information

Our obligations

The NSW public health service is committed to safeguarding the privacy of patient information and has implemented measures to comply with its obligations under the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. All staff of the Ambulance Service of New South Wales are bound by law, by the NSW Health privacy policy and by a strict code of conduct to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of our patients' information.

This leaflet provides you with details of what personal information is held about you, how you can access this information and the purposes for which your personal information may be used and disclosed. Your personal information includes your personal details and personal health information relating to your treatment.

What information is collected?

If you call 000 for an ambulance, your call will be recorded and a copy kept for 12 months. When you are transported to hospital, ambulance officers will complete a Patient Health Care Record and leave a copy with the hospital. This will contain your personal information. We only collect information that is relevant and necessary for your treatment, on going care and to manage our health service.

We collect information directly from you, wherever possible. In an emergency we may also need to collect information from a family member, friend, carer or other person who can help us to provide you with the best possible care.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the information we collect about you is stored securely. We are required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time. Patient health care records are retained for 25 years. Appropriate systems and policies are in place to protect your information from loss, unauthorised access and misuse.

If you do not wish for us to collect certain information about you, you need to advise us and we will discuss with you any consequences this may have on your health care.

Use and disclosure

We will use or disclose your information for purposes directly related to your treatment, in ways that you would reasonably expect for your ongoing care. This will usually include providing information to the hospital you are transported to so that you receive the best possible care.

We are required to disclose some patient information to State and Commonwealth government agencies to comply with other laws.

Your personal information may be required as evidence in court when the Ambulance Service of New South Wales is subpoenaed.

We may use or disclose patient information for billing, statutory reporting and other purposes required for the operation of the NSW health service, including safety and quality improvement initiatives. For example, where relevant, we may need to disclose patient information to Medicare, private health funds, the Department of Veteran Affairs and NSW Health.

We may use your information to contact you regarding patient satisfaction surveys that help us to evaluate and improve our services.

We may use or disclose your information for the following purposes in accordance with statutory guidelines issued under privacy law:

- for staff and student training purposes,
- for research purposes
- for other planning, financial or management purposes for health service activities
- for public interest research, complying with strict protocols approved by a human research and ethics committee

The statutory guidelines ensure that when your information is needed for these purposes and it is not practical to seek your consent, a minimum amount of personal information is used, and the personal information is handled in accordance with strict standards.

We will seek your consent prior to the use or disclosure of patient information for purposes other than those listed above, such as for fundraising activities.

Access to your information

You are entitled to request access to all personal information, including your Patient Health Care Record, held by the Ambulance Service of New South Wales. Normally you will be asked to apply for access in writing and provide identification. You may be charged a fee if you request copies of your personal information or Patient Health Care Record.

Access to your personal information may be declined in special circumstances, such as where giving access could put you or another person at risk of harm.

If you believe the information we hold about you is incorrect or an error has been made, please let us know and we will correct the information. If we believe the information is correct, you may request that your comments be noted on the record.

Requests for access to or correction of your medical record should be addressed to:

Ambulance Service of New South Wales
Medical Record Department
PO Box 17
HAMILTON NSW 2303
Phone: (02) 4921 7534

Contact us

If you have any questions or wish to make a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please contact:

Ambulance Service of New South Wales
Locked Bag 105
ROZELLE NSW 2039
Tel: (02) 9320 7707

Or visit the Ambulance Service of New South Wales website:
www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au