



Advanced QA Guide for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)



Quality Assurance (QA) in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) ensures that medical emergencies are handled with precision and efficiency

This guide offers advanced strategies for evaluating and enhancing call handling, focusing on different types of medical emergencies and detailed QA practices.

1. Evaluating High-Acuity Medical Calls

Objective: Accurately assess and improve handling of high-acuity calls, such as cardiac arrests and severe trauma.

STEPS:

- **Define High-Acuity Call Criteria:**

Action: Establish criteria for high-acuity calls that include symptoms such as unresponsiveness, severe bleeding, or chest pain.

Example: Create a checklist for cardiac arrest calls that includes verifying the caller's ability to perform CPR and ensuring timely dispatch of advanced life support.

- **Review Call Handling Against Protocols:**

Action: Evaluate calls based on adherence to advanced protocols, such as those for CPR instructions or trauma care. Check for accurate and timely information collection.

Example: Ensure that dispatchers provide precise CPR instructions and confirm the caller's understanding before dispatching units.

- **Analyze Call Outcomes:**

Action: Compare call outcomes with response data to assess the effectiveness of dispatch decisions. Look for correlations between call handling and patient outcomes.

Example: Review the impact of dispatcher instructions on survival rates for cardiac arrest cases, adjusting protocols based on findings.

- **Implement Targeted Training:**

Action: Develop training programs that focus on high-acuity call scenarios. Include simulation-based exercises and role-playing for practice.

Example: Conduct regular drills for managing severe trauma cases, emphasizing correct use of guidecards and decision-making under pressure.

2. Managing Pediatric Emergency Calls



Objective: Ensure accurate and effective handling of pediatric medical emergencies, which often require specialized knowledge and communication techniques.

STEPS:

- **Develop Pediatric-Specific QA Criteria:**

Action: Create QA criteria tailored to pediatric emergencies, focusing on age-specific protocols and communication with parents or guardians.

Example: Include criteria for assessing the appropriateness of dosing instructions for medications and verifying symptoms for age-specific conditions.

- **Assess Communication Skills:**

Action: Evaluate how dispatchers communicate with callers regarding pediatric emergencies. Ensure they provide clear, age-appropriate instructions and manage parental anxiety effectively.

Example: Review calls for clarity in instructions for infant CPR or medication dosing, and assess the dispatcher's ability to reassure anxious parents.

- **Utilize Pediatric-Specific Training:**

Action: Implement training programs that address pediatric emergency protocols and communication strategies. Incorporate case studies and real-life scenarios.

Example: Develop workshops focused on handling common pediatric emergencies, such as respiratory distress or fever, with hands-on practice.

- **Review Case Studies and Outcomes:**

Action: Analyze case studies and outcomes specific to pediatric calls. Identify patterns in call handling and response effectiveness..

Example: Review cases of pediatric asthma attacks to evaluate the accuracy of symptom assessment and the timeliness of dispatch.

3. Handling Behavioral Health Emergencies



Objective: Improve management of calls involving behavioral health crises, such as suicidal ideation or psychiatric emergencies.

STEPS:

- **Establish Behavioral Health QA Criteria:**

Action: Define QA criteria for behavioral health emergencies, focusing on crisis de-escalation techniques and appropriate resource allocation.

Example: Criteria should include the assessment of risk factors, use of de-escalation techniques, and coordination with mental health professionals.

- **Evaluate De-Escalation Techniques:**

Action: Review the effectiveness of de-escalation techniques used by dispatchers. Assess their ability to manage caller emotions and ensure safety.

Example: Analyze calls involving suicidal callers to determine if the dispatcher used appropriate techniques to stabilize the situation.

- **Incorporate Behavioral Health Training:**

Action: Provide specialized training for handling behavioral health emergencies. Include role-playing scenarios and guidance on interacting with individuals in crisis.

Example: Offer training sessions on recognizing signs of mental health crises and employing strategies to manage high-risk situations.

- **Monitor Coordination with Mental Health Resources:**

Action: Ensure effective coordination between dispatchers and mental health professionals. Review the integration of mental health services into the response process.

Example: Assess how dispatchers connect callers to crisis intervention teams and track the follow-up on behavioral health referrals.

4. Ensuring Compliance with EMD Protocols



Objective: Maintain adherence to established EMD protocols and guidelines to ensure consistent and high-quality dispatching.

STEPS:

- **Review Protocol Adherence:**

Action: Conduct regular reviews of call handling to ensure compliance with EMD protocols. Assess the dispatcher's use of guidecards and adherence to procedural steps.

Example: Verify that dispatchers correctly follow protocol for managing stroke symptoms and provide appropriate guidance.

- **Conduct Protocol Audits:**

Action: Perform periodic audits of EMD protocols to ensure they are up-to-date and reflect current best practices. Adjust training and QA criteria as needed.

Example: Audit protocols for managing allergic reactions and update them based on recent medical guidelines and feedback.

- **Implement Continuous Feedback Loops:**

Action: Create feedback mechanisms for dispatchers to receive ongoing input on protocol adherence. Use feedback to address issues and reinforce best practices.

Example: Develop a system for dispatchers to receive real-time feedback on their call handling, including reminders for protocol adherence.

- **Update and Train on Protocol Changes:**

Action: Ensure that all dispatchers are informed and trained on any changes to EMD protocols. Provide updates and refresher courses as needed.

Example: Roll out training sessions when new protocols are introduced, including updated guidecards and revised procedures.

5. Leveraging Technology for QA



Objective: Utilize advanced technology to enhance QA processes and improve call handling efficiency.

STEPS:

- **Implement Advanced QA Software:**

Action: Deploy software that supports automated scoring, real-time monitoring, and comprehensive reporting. Ensure it integrates with existing call recording systems.

Example: Use software that provides automated scoring for protocol adherence and generates detailed performance reports for review.

- **Utilize Speech Analytics:**

Action: Apply speech analytics to analyze call content and identify trends in dispatcher performance. Use this data to target specific areas for improvement.

Example: Use speech analytics to identify common errors in symptom assessment or instruction delivery, and adjust training accordingly.

- **Integrate with CAD Systems:**

Action: Ensure QA tools integrate seamlessly with Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems for real-time data updates and improved coordination.

Example: Link QA software with CAD systems to provide real-time feedback on call handling and track performance metrics.

- **Develop Data-Driven Improvement Plans:**

Action: Use data from QA tools to create targeted improvement plans for dispatchers. Set measurable goals and track progress over time.

Example: Analyze performance data to identify trends and develop action plans for reducing errors in high-priority medical calls.



This advanced QA guide for Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) provides in-depth strategies for evaluating and improving call handling across various types of medical emergencies. By implementing these detailed practices, 911 centers can enhance their EMD processes, ensure high-quality service, and effectively address dispatcher challenges.

For more resources and support, explore our additional guides and training materials on advanced EMD practices.



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