



## Did You Know...

# Affiliation Agreements

August 2024

Did you know how important it is to maintain current affiliation agreements with clinical and EMS agency partners? CAAHEP Standard V.F. Fair Practices of the *CAAHEP Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in the Emergency Medical Services Professions* addresses this issue.

Per the *CAAHEP Standards*, Standard V.F.:

"There must be a formal affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding between the program sponsor and all other entities that participate in the education of the students describing the relationship, roles, and responsibilities of the program sponsor and that entity."

Further clarification is provided in the CoAEMSP Interpretations of the *CAAHEP Standards*:

"There must be current affiliation agreements with clinical partners, field experience, and capstone field internship sites that define the responsibilities of both the program and the sponsor, detailing what the students can do and the responsibilities of the preceptor. Students may not participate in clinical and field assignments unless there is a current executed affiliation agreement."

For program sponsors that offer both AEMT and Paramedic courses, affiliation agreements must include both programs.

If the sponsor is a consortium, the agreement must be with a legal entity that can enter into such an agreement (i.e., one of the consortium members). The responsibility for maintaining such agreements must be included in the Consortium Memorandum of Understanding.

Affiliation agreements or contracts may have automatic renewal provisions. Still, the program should show evidence of periodic review that the affiliation continues to meet the program's needs and that the agreements reflect the current name of the parties.

If the program uses a secure electronic signature, all members must agree to allow such signatures. A jpeg or other image attached to a document is not a secure electronic signature. A secure electronic signature is unique and under the sole control of the individual creating the signature, and the

technology must be able to identify if the document was changed in any way after the electronic signature was applied.”

As any long-time program director will attest, keeping up with contracts that require renewal or extension can be quite a challenge. A best practice is to maintain a spreadsheet or database that includes the details of each contract, such as date of execution, date of expiration, if the contract can be extended by written notice when it was sent for review or renewal, and other pertinent details. Evergreen contracts (i.e., have no ‘term’ or termination date) are allowed but not recommended. Organization names, requirements of either party, or leadership change, so it is recommended that both parties have a periodic review of the agreement.

There is no CoAEMSP-required template or language, and each program and organization typically has its format and requirements. Remember that a contract is invalid unless signed and dated by both parties.

These legal agreements protect the student and the program, and students should never be placed at a clinical or field internship site unless a valid contract is in place.