


MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Honorable Mayor & City Council

FROM: Lacey G. Simpson, Assistant City Manager Initials: 

DATE: March 28, 2023 File #: MGR23-155

RE: **Ordinance No. 23-1971, Amending Ketchikan Municipal Code Section 18.44.020, Entitled “Charges” Relating To Fees For Ambulance Services; And Establishing An Effective Date**

The attached ordinance amending the Ketchikan Municipal Code (KMC) was prepared by City Attorney Mitch Seaver at the request of Fire Chief Rick Hines. If adopted in first reading, Ordinance No. 23-1971 will increase various charges and fees related to ambulance services delivered by the City.

As explained in the attached transmittal memorandum from Chief Hines, both the North Tongass and South Tongass Volunteer Fire Departments plan on introducing a companion ordinance to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly to establish uniform, island-wide pricing for ambulance services. The updated fees will better align with the allowable fees for Medicare and Medicaid patients, which comprise 78% of the local paying patients requiring emergency transport.

The City Attorney and Fire Chief will be attending the City Council meeting of April 6, 2023, in order to address any questions and/or concerns that Councilors may have.

A motion has been prepared for City Council consideration.

Recommended Motion: I move that the City Council approve Ordinance No. 23-1971 in first reading, amending section 18.44.020 of the Ketchikan Municipal Code entitled “Charges” related to fees for ambulance services; and establishing an effective date.



KETCHIKAN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, Compassion, Teamwork, and Innovation
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Phone (907) 225-9616 – Fax (907) 225-9613
Fire Chief Rick Hines
e-mail: rickh@city.ketchikan.ak.us

Memorandum

TO: Delilah Walsh, City Manager
FROM: Rick Hines, Fire Chief
DATE: 03/24/2023
SUBJECT: KMC Update for 18.44.020

The Ketchikan Fire Department (KFD) would like to update 18.44.020, the fee schedule for Ambulance transports performed by the Ketchikan Fire Department. Updating these rates will ensure we can collect the maximum allowable reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid Patients. The last update for this was completed in 2018.

System Design West (SDW) recently informed us that our \$13 a-mile rate per loaded mile was less than the allowable \$16 for Medicare and Medicaid Patients. SDW also suggested cleaning up some of the wording and charges in our billing ordinance.

The payer mix for Ketchikan is as follows:

45% Medicare
33% Medicaid
17% Commercial Insurance
5 % Self-pay or uninsured

This ordinance change allowed the Borough and the city to align their ambulance billing rates to the same pricing. North and South Tongass Chiefs met with me and, following SDW guidelines, agreed on uniform pricing island-wide for transports. This is the first time an agreement between all three fire departments has been reached with regard to ambulance billing, and I believe the updated Borough ordinance will be read at their 04/04/23 assembly meeting.

In 2022 we paid \$13,320 from our budget in fees to the Borough for using the airport ferry. The increase in the billed amount is to cover future increases and help offset this budget line item.

When an air ambulance is coming to the hospital with an isolette KFD will go and pick the crew up in our ambulance and transport the crew and isolette to the hospital. This transport results in KFD paying the ferry fee and two firefighters two hours of overtime to assure we have an ambulance on the town side ready to respond. This fee will help offset the costs associated with this process.

THE CITY OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

ORDINANCE NO. 23-1971

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA; AMENDING KETCHIKAN MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 18.44.020; ENTITLED, “CHARGES” RELATING TO FEES FOR AMBULANCE SERVICES; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: Amendment. Section 18.44.020 of the Ketchikan Municipal Code, entitled “Charges,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

“The charges for use of and the services provided by each city ambulance shall be determined by the extent of care required to stabilize the patient’s condition and by the resources required to provide that care.

(a) Charges are as follows:

(1) Acuity I – Basic Life Support – (BLS) – ~~[\$600.00]~~**800.00**. Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, including BLS ambulance services as defined by state emergency medical services regulations. The ambulance must be staffed by an individual who is qualified in accordance with state and local laws as an emergency medical technician basic (EMT Basic), or Alaska EMT 1. This acuity will be used for airport transports unless the patient meets the requirements of a higher acuity level.

(2) Acuity II – Basic Life Support – (BLS) Emergency – ~~[\$600.00]~~**800.00**. BLS service, as specified above, when the service has been provided in immediate response to a 911 call or the equivalent. An immediate response is one in which the fire department begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

(3) Acuity III – Advanced Life Support Level 1 – (ALS1) – ~~[\$800.00]~~**1,000.00**. Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including the provision of an ALS assessment or at least one ALS intervention. An ALS provider is a provider trained to the emergency medical technician – intermediate (EMT-Intermediate), Alaska EMT 2, Alaska EMT 3 or paramedic level. ALS intervention is a procedure beyond the scope of an EMT Basic.

(4) Acuity IV – Advanced Life Support Level 1 – (ALS1) Emergency – ~~[\$800.00]~~**1,000.00**. ALS 1 service, as specified above, when the service has been provided in immediate response to a 911 call or the equivalent. An immediate response is one in which the fire department begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.

(5) Acuity V – Advance Life Support Level 2 – (ALS2) ~~[\$1,000.00]~~**1,200.00**. Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including:

(A) At least three separate administrations of one or more medications by intravenous push/bolus or by continuous infusion (excluding crystalloid fluids); or

(B) The provision of at least one of the following procedures: manual defibrillation/cardioversion; endotracheal intubation; central venous line; cardiac pacing; chest decompression; surgical airway; or intraosseous line.

~~[(b) For patients who do not reside within the city of Ketchikan, there shall be an additional charge of \$200.00.]~~

~~[(c) An additional charge of \$3.00 per minute shall be made when transportation is delayed by more than 20 minutes by the patient, the discharging facility, the receiving facility or by other transportation facilities.]~~

~~[(d) If more than one patient is transported, mileage or delay charges only shall be apportioned between them equally.]~~

~~(b[e])~~ An additional charge of ~~[\$32.00]~~**50.00**. shall be made when transportation requires the use of the airport ferry.

~~(c[f])~~ An additional charge of ~~[\$13.00]~~**20.00**. per loaded mile will be assessed for all transports regardless of transport acuity level.

(d) For the transport of an empty isolette from the airport to the hospital via ambulance, the air ambulance service provider will be billed \$500.00.

Section 2: Effective Date. This ordinance is effective one (1) month after its final passage and publication.

PASSED ON FIRST READING _____.

FINAL PASSAGE _____.

Dave Kiffer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim L. Stanker
City Clerk

FYI: Bracketed language is intended to be removed from the existing ordinance, and underlined language in bold type is intended as an addition to the existing Ketchikan Municipal Code.

EFFECTIVE		DATE:	
ROLL CALL	YEA	NAY	ABSENT
BRADBERRY			
FINNEGAN			
FLORA			
GAGE			
GASS			
KISTLER			
MAHTANI			
MAYOR			