



Sound Ambulance Care; summary

Version 3.0, August 2009

Introduction

Since 1996 the Sound Ambulance Care Memo is prepared by national organizations for professionals and ambulanceservices in The Netherlands. It represents the basis for national guidelines, protocols and the certification of the ambulance services. The memo is based on the Dutch Care Institutions (Quality) Act and it concisely describes what is meant by sound care. This document is a summary of the third version of the Sound Ambulance Care Memo.

In the Dutch Care Institutions (Quality) Act [*Kwaliteitswet zorginstellingen*], sound care is described as: quality care that is effective, efficient, coordinated and geared to the actual needs of the client. The further interpretation of these terms by the ambulance sector is based on a number of categories. For the further interpretation of the term sound care, the ambulance sector has taken the future policy of the government and client/consumer organisations as a basis. The client aspect is central to this policy. However, the sustainable appeal of excellent care organisations to professionals and the characteristics of good governance as a condition for a stable, reliable and transparent care organisation are also important. Based on this framework, sound ambulance care may be summarised as follows:

Sound ambulance care:

1. is available and accessible;
2. is transparent;
3. is professional, high-quality and safe;
4. is clearly and unequivocally defined, with the client's privacy being guaranteed;
5. is perfectly in line with the care of partners in the chain;
6. provides for the proper handling of complaints;
7. provides for client participation and is supplied by organisations that meet the requirements of good governance.

1. Available and accessible care

- *Accessibility*
Ambulance care is available via the Ambulance Care Dispatch Centres (MKA) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- *Spread and availability*
There is a good spread of ambulance care. This means that in the case of urgent, life-threatening situations, ambulance care is available in accordance with the national benchmark.

- *The right care at the right time: triage*
By means of triage, the Ambulance Care Dispatch Centre ensures that a client receives the right care at the right time, in both standard and up-scaled situations.

- *Care differentiation*
The Regional Ambulance Service provides a range of care, so that the care is optimally geared to the client's needs.

2. Transparency

- *Transparency for the client and the referrer*
The care available from the Regional Ambulance Service and the care received is clear to the client and the referrer.
- *Transparent care process*
The ambulance care process is clear to all those involved (clients, chain partners).
- *Long-term policy plan*
The Regional Ambulance Service has a long-term policy plan, in which the Service's long-range vision of sound ambulance care and the specific details are formulated.
- *Management information*
The Regional Ambulance Service has management information available, which highlights the results of the ambulance care process and facilitates control of the process where necessary.
- *Annual report*
Each year, the Regional Ambulance Service gives an account of its activities and the results achieved, by means of an annual report.
- *Sector report*
The Regional Ambulance Service provides the agreed data for the sector report on an annual basis.
- *External assessment and certification*
The Regional Ambulance Service has a certified quality system that guarantees and highlights the quality of the care provided.

3. Professional, high-quality and safe

- *Qualified, competent and involved*
Ambulance care is provided by qualified, competent and involved staff.
- *Protocol care*
National protocols guarantee the uniformity and professionalism of ambulance care and ensure that it is transparent and verifiable.
- *High-quality and functional equipment*
High-quality and functional equipment is used to provide ambulance care.

- *Medical final responsibility*

The Regional Ambulance Service ensures that the medical quality of the care provided is guaranteed to best effect.

- *Care innovation*

The Regional Ambulance Service has a constant focus on innovation in the range of care provided, so that the ambulance care is optimally geared to the client's and society's needs.

- *Safety*

The safety of the client when care is provided and during transport is guaranteed to best effect.

- *Preventing incidents*

The Regional Ambulance Service uses a system geared to preventing incidents during the provision of ambulance care and responding correctly if an incident occurs.

4. Information, permission, documentation and privacy

- *General information provision*

The Regional Ambulance Service provides as much information as possible to clients, potential clients and interested parties about the care offered by the Service.

- *Information provision to individual clients*

Clients and/or their next-of-kin are given as much information as possible about the care they are or will be receiving.

- *Permission*

Ambulance care providers act in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to obtaining permission. In urgent cases where it is not possible to obtain permission, ambulance care providers act in accordance with professional standards and take their responsibilities as proper care providers.

- *Documentation*

Information relating to the client and the care provided is noted by the dispatch centre operator and the ambulance care provider and included in a client file.

- *Privacy protection*

Ambulance care providers guarantee the client's privacy out of respect for the client and in accordance with the professional confidentiality that they are obliged to observe.

5. Continuity of care and coordination with chain partners

- *Collaboration with chain partners*

The Regional Ambulance Services works closely within the region with other care providers to guarantee the continuity of care.

- *Proper transfer of care*

The Regional Ambulance Service ensures that, if necessary, clients are properly transferred to other care providers or that other care providers are engaged.

6. Handling of complaints and client experience

- *Handling of complaints*

Client complaints are dealt with professionally. By responding effectively to comments by clients, complaints can be prevented.

- *Client experiences*

The Regional Ambulance Service conducts periodic client experience investigations. The results lead to improvements, where necessary.

7. Participation and good governance

- *Client participation*

The Regional Ambulance Service has a client participation structure and procedure, which is geared to the character of emergency care provision.

- *Good governance*

The Regional Ambulance Service meets the requirements of good governance.