



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All MA Ambulance and EFR Services
FROM: W. Scott Cluett III, NRP, Director
DATE: May 23, 2022
RE: Ensuring Proper Pediatric Bag-Valve Mask Device and Mask Compatibility

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services (Department) has identified some concerning issues regarding certain pediatric bag-valve mask (BVM) devices and ordering configurations, which in some cases will prevent EMS personnel from providing appropriate treatment to patients, and do not meet the requirements of Administrative Requirement (AR) 5-401. The way some manufacturers package these BVMs, and some ordering platforms list them, with mask size options, they can be mistakenly ordered with the wrong mask size, which could result in the inability to deliver therapy across the anticipated age and weight ranges that the device is meant to serve.

The following are examples of what the Department inspections have found on several ambulances:

- Child-size BVMs have been found packaged only with a neonatal size mask, or only with an infant-size mask.
 - If this type of mismatched configuration is the only child-size BVM available and EMS is called for a child needing respiratory assistance, EMS personnel may be unable to ventilate that child with this device due to the wrong mask size, depriving the child of critical therapy. Also, if EMS was responding to a patient in the neonatal or infant age/weight range who needed ventilation, using this child-size BVM configuration could be detrimental, with the potential for delivering excessive tidal volume.
- Infant-size BVMs have been found packaged with only a neonate mask.
 - An infant-size BVM with a neonate mask would not be able to be used to deliver appropriate care for a larger infant.

The Department is in discussion with manufacturers and distributors to raise these concerns and minimize the opportunity for ambulance services ordering and receiving mismatched pediatric BVMs and masks. In the meantime, **all ambulance and EFR services, as well as first responder agencies, must double check their pediatric BVM units, to ensure they have the correct size masks with the devices, both in their vehicles and in extra stock they hold.**

If you have any questions, please contact Deputy Director Susan Lewis, NRP, I/C at Susan.K.Lewis@mass.gov.