



# EMS UPDATE

News from the Office of EMS and Trauma

Volume Ten, Issue 2

## DIRECTOR'S WORDS

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the services that have embraced the State EMS data requirements. Many of you may not know that this initiative was given to all states by the federal government. Alabama has demonstrated that all State-licensed EMS providers have the ability to submit data and most are in compliance with the 168-hour submission requirement. During a recent conversation with a representative from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), I was told that Alabama is ranked among the top five states for data submission. This information was given to him at a meeting in Washington, D.C. While the uninformed may complain about the EMS system in Alabama, we are truly a leader in the nation in many aspects.

Being the regulatory arm of the state,

the Office of EMS and Trauma receives the barbs and arrows of those who wish government would stay out of things. Licensed health care providers and personnel will always require oversight and believe it or not, EMS is first and foremost an integral part of the health care industry, regardless of whether it operates in a public safety, private, industrial, hospital or volunteer venue.

We are currently working with our e-PCR NEMSIS complaint software vendor to develop a reporting program. Hopefully, this will be out soon and each provider using our free software will be able to run their own data reports. This should help each EMS provider service conduct in-house QA/QI processes.

There have been several states that have contacted our office about the Alabama Trauma System. The State of

Georgia recently visited the Alabama Trauma Communication Center (ATCC) and stated that they are going to copy our plan. This speaks volumes to the work Dr. Williamson, Dr. Campbell, Choona Lang, RN, Alex Franklin and Joe Acker with BREMSS have done. We are currently receiving applications from East, Gulf and Southeast regions. It is our goal to have these regions up and running by the end of the year.

The EMS Bill will be introduced this year. This bill basically brings the EMS language up to date and does not include fee increases or fines. It does attempt to reduce the Advisory Board down to a manageable size while still allowing all stakeholders to have a voice.

**Dennis Blair, Director  
Office of EMS & Trauma**

## STATE EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The statewide trauma system continues to progress though slower than we would like. The BREMSS and North region systems continue to be operational with BREMSS having an average of 302 patients entered each month and North having an average of 110 patients entered per month. The trauma system plans are completed for the East, Southeast, and Gulf regions and prehospital provider education is in progress. Many of the hospital applications from these regions are completed and hospital inspections have begun in the Gulf region and will begin in the East and Southeast regions in April. The West region has had its initial Town Hall meeting and is developing the Regional Trauma Advisory Council at this time.

Now that almost all provider services are submitting data by way of the ePCR we are seeing that in the regions where the trauma system is operational (North & BREMSS) providers are frequently forgetting to record the ATCC identification number in the ePCR. Please remember that the unique identification number is used to match the prehospital report and the hospital chart for QI purposes. Please always record the trauma ID number in the space provided in the ePCR.

The next State Emergency Medicine Control Committee (SEMCC) meeting is scheduled for June 2 at 1pm. It will be at the Alabama Power Conference Center in Clanton. This is the SEMCC meeting where each year we update the patient care protocols. The protocol subcommittee is

looking at several changes but it is too early to say what all of them will be. If you have suggestions for changes or additions to the patient care protocols please send them to Dr. John Campbell (John.Campbell@adph.state.al.us).

There seems to be a rumor going around that we will be requiring every service to do 12-lead EKGs and every ALS service to use capnography for intubations. While this is a reasonable goal to set for the future, neither of these will be required any time soon because of the cost required. We compliment those services that have voluntarily purchased this equipment. We will be studying the frequency of use of the colorimetric CO2 detector to monitor endotracheal intubation (it should be 100%). ❄️

# TRAUMA CASE STUDY

**Situation:** You are called to the scene of a single auto collision where an SUV left the road in a curve, rolled over several times and eventually hit a tree. First responders are on the scene when you arrive. They tell you that there were two passengers in the vehicle and neither was restrained. The front seat passenger was ejected. They say that the patient who was ejected was unresponsive, had a pulse a couple of minutes ago, but they can't feel one now. The driver of the vehicle has altered mental status but is moving all extremities and responds to voice. You are a paramedic and you have a basic driver. The nearest Level I trauma center is over an hour away by ground. There is a Level III trauma center 20 minutes away. How would you handle this scene?

**Answer:** You should immediately call for backup since there are potentially two patients and you can't transport both of them. You and your partner should rapidly evaluate the ejected patient first. You find

the patient is unresponsive, not breathing, has no palpable pulse, and has dilated and fixed pupils. By Protocol 8.1 (Death in the Field) you know that this patient meets criteria for blunt trauma death in the field and should have no attempt at resuscitation. You immediately move to the vehicle and find the driver to be confused, but following commands, and is complaining of abdominal pain. The steering wheel is bent. Blood pressure is 80 systolic with a pulse of 130 and respiratory rate of 20. Anterior chest and abdomen are tender. Breath sounds are present and equal. The GCS is 13 (E3, V4, M6). This patient meets trauma system criteria so you call the Alabama Trauma Communications Center (ATCC) and enter the patient. You are told that the Level I and the nearby Level III trauma centers are green. The patient has a "Load and Go" condition so you consider calling a helicopter for transport but know the response time will be over 20 minutes so you elect to put the helicopter on standby and you transport the patient to the

Level III trauma center. The Level III trauma center is able to manage the patient so you cancel the helicopter flight.

**Discussion:** Patients who have a blunt trauma arrest in the field are pronounced dead on scene. Do not move these patients but allow the coroner or law enforcement to assume responsibility for the body. Direct your care to the living patients. The above patient met physiologic criteria for entering into the trauma system as well as load and go criteria. If the patient meets load and go criteria you should transport immediately. If you wish to call a helicopter to transport the patient, have them meet you at a mutually agreed upon location but do not wait on scene for them to arrive. For most helicopter services, when you call for a helicopter the person you are talking to is not at the helicopter base in Alabama but is at an out of state dispatch center. Unless you personally talk to the crew of the helicopter the estimated time of arrival is unreliable. ❄️

## EMS-C UPDATE | MARCH, 2009 | Katherine Dixon Hert [Katherine.Hert@adph.state.al.us](mailto:Katherine.Hert@adph.state.al.us)

### EMSC Grant Update:

The grant year ended February 28 and we were unfortunately not funded for the 2009-2010 grant year. We were awarded a one-year extension in order to carry forward left over funds and continue working until December when we will apply for 2010-2011 funding.

The goals we are focused on through February 2010 are:

- Maintaining a full-time EMSC grant manager. This position in the past has been a part-time position.
- I will be attending the National EMSC Data Analysis Resource Center's (NEDARC) Analyzing Your State's EMSC Performance Measure Data workshop in Savannah, GA. At last check, we had exceeded the data collection goal for the 2005-2008 grant cycle and have almost reached the 2009-2011 data collection goal. Many thanks to the EMSC Regional Directors who got the word out about the survey.
- The visual translation cards are on their way and will be disseminated to our provider services to aid in communicating with patients whose first language is not English.
- There are also some equipment purchases in process for some of our services. A goal for this program is to guarantee that all licensed provider services have the proper equipment to provide optimal care to pediatric patients.

- We will continue to hold EMSC Advisory Board meetings in order to continue the EMSC Mission.
- We hope to hold the Second Annual EMSC Conference and will do so with support from the Advisory Board Members and our external partners.
- There will be Pediatric ITLS courses offered in conjunction with the EMSC Conference as well as sessions focused on EMS and Trauma. ❄️

### DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS FOR OEMST STAFF?

This is another reminder to those of you calling our Office (334-206-5383):

Complaints, Investigations - Call Mark Jackson

Service Inspections or Service Licenses - Call Hugh Hollon or Kem Thomas

Individual Training, Testing or Individual Licenses - Call Gary Mackey or Stephanie Smith

Name	Complaint	Rule/Protocol	Action Taken
EMT-Basic	Impairment	420-2-1-.21	License Surrender
EMT-Basic	Impairment	420-2-1-.21	License Suspension
EMT-Basic	Impairment	420-2-1-.21	License Suspension
Phillip Harrington EMT-Paramedic	HIPPA Violation/Pt Confidentiality	420-2-1-.25	License Suspension
EMT-Paramedic	Impairment	420-2-1-.21	Revocation Hearing
EMT-Paramedic	Impairment	420-2-1-.21	Licensure Action Pending
Jesse Testerman EMT-Paramedic	Responsibility for Patient	420-2-1-.16	Remedial Education
Am Serv EMS Inc. of Bibb	Unlicensed Ambulance Driver	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
Anniston EMS	Unlicensed EMT- Paramedic	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
Arab Fire Rescue	Unlicensed EMT-Basic	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
Blount EMS, Inc.	Unlicensed EMT-Basic	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
County EMS LLC	Unlicensed Ambulance Driver	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
Lanett Fire & EMS	Unlicensed Ambulance Driver	420-2-1-.03	Turned over to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Payers
A-Med	Patient Care Issue	No State EMS Rules Violation	No Action Taken
Am Serv EMS of Bibb	Patient Transportation	Patient Rights Protocol	No Action Taken
Lifeguard Ambulance Service (Jefferson)	Patient Care Issue	No State EMS Rules Violation	No Action Taken
Angel Ambulance Service	Patient Transportation	Patient Rights Protocol	No Action Taken
Med Call Ambulance	No Liability Insurance	420-2-1-.03	Temporarily Out of Service

Note: Names are not listed for Impairment Complaints in order to follow HIPAA Regulations.

### NEWSLETTER REMINDER

The newsletter is free to anyone as long as they have internet access to our web page [www.adph.org/ems](http://www.adph.org/ems). The newsletters can be found under the News from the Office of EMS and Trauma link on the front page or to all Alabama licensed EMS personnel that have a valid email address. Our licensure database is used to store your last submitted valid email address, but cannot accommodate unlicensed people. They will have to visit our web site to view or download the newsletter.

If you are not getting our newsletter via email it is either because it was sent to us in an illegible or incorrect format or

you changed it and did not update it through our office. You can email any changes via [emsinquiry@adph.state.al.us](mailto:emsinquiry@adph.state.al.us) or call office staff at 334-206-5383.

Also, you may have a spam blocker set up on your email. Our office has no way to manually or automatically address this issue. Multitudes of emails are "kicked back" to our office email system with message asking us to complete a number of tasks to be allowed to send you an email. As long as you have this set up on your pc, you will not be able to receive our newsletter.

Phase 2, e-PCR 168-hour reporting compliance began and is being monitored every 7 days by our research analyst. A number of agencies reported once or twice to meet the January 1, 2009 Phase 1 requirements then simply stopped. Our research analyst reports these occurrences to our compliance people. They in turn confirm that the EMS responses are or are not being made through the local dispatch agencies and then they are contacting the noncompliant agencies to get them back into compliance. A lot of manpower is wasted, but as long as people are determined to be noncompliant, our office will meet the challenge. Please be aware that Phase 2 will go on for perpetuity.

Submitting e-PCRs is a rules requirement for all Alabama licensed EMS agencies. It does not matter if you transport a patient or not. If you provide any care or intervention, including an assessment that the patient is OK, you must record a medical record of that event. PCRs are legal medical documents representing the events and actions occurring during your time providing care to an injured or ill patient. Every PCR must be completed in its entirety. Current data analysis clearly shows people are taking short cuts and are not documenting medications, procedures and protocols. The narrative is being used as a catch-all and while it is very important legally to document as much as possible, it is not appropriate to skip documenting in the meds, procedures and protocol fields. If we cannot get a clear picture of what is happening with these 3 areas, we will not be able to make our system better. Please take a few extra minutes to complete the report in its entirety. The last thing anyone wants is to end up in court without an appropriate medical record or one that was not documented at all.

Some e-PCR Points of Clarification: (Some of these have already been reported in previous newsletters, but always are worth repeating)

1.) It is a requirement to complete a patient care report on every emergency medical response when a patient was

seen and evaluated. This office is already monitoring submission rates and comparative data suggests that many agencies are not reporting all runs as required. Phase 2 will address this issue with each agency in 2009. Please submit all required runs to avoid noncompliance.

- 2.) The only time you do not have to complete an e-PCR is on false calls, standbys and non-emergency transfers where you do nothing more than monitor vital signs. However, if you do anything considered a patient intervention beyond monitoring vital signs, then legal documentation in the form of an e-PCR must be completed. Accurate documentation may be a pain, but it will protect you if the need arises.
- 3.) Each record must be submitted electronically within 168 hours or less. The goal is to eventually narrow that down to within 24 hours once people become more comfortable with their chosen software. The 24-hour reporting allows Public Health to monitor surveillance trends as required by the Federal emergency preparedness guidelines.
- 4.) Our IT staff is always available to assist you with your e-PCR needs. The problem is that we only have 2 staff members and 308 licensed agencies wanting immediate satisfaction. If you need assistance, you may call Chris or Craig at 334-206- 5383. You may get a voice recording depending on the call volume. They will eventually get back to you. If you do not hear from them within a reasonable time, you may wish to email them at [emsis@adph.state.al.us](mailto:emsis@adph.state.al.us). These guys are really good at what they do, you just have to be patient.

5.) The patient's Social Security number is a required field. Most EMS personnel feel uncomfortable reporting this number, but you need not worry. The OEMS&T is protected from HIPAA violations and as agents of the OEMS&T, you and your agency are protected from HIPAA violations as

long as you report the information according to our outlined requirements. The SS# is a very important research tool and connecting various health care records is almost impossible without this identifier. The OEMS&T will be tracking this field closely to monitor for compliance and false reporting. Never use all the same numbers to trick the field, like all 9's or any other fictitious number. It is fraud when you knowingly report patient information inaccurately. The negative reporting values that should be used if there is not a legitimate SS# is "not known, not available or not recorded" and these should only be used when factual.

- 6.) A person responding for your agency who is not licensed by this office as either a Driver, EMT, EMT-I or EMT-P cannot enter an e-PCR into the system, nor can they be added into the report. Only those licensed EMS personnel can enter a report. If you respond with a person that is not licensed, do not attempt to put them into the system as a responding person. The system will not accept their name. You can add them to the narrative section if you choose.
- 7.) The Office of EMS and Trauma will be conducting free e-PCR training in our conference room on the 7th floor of the RSA Tower. Each month there will be 2 days reserved for this training. Each day there will be a morning session and an afternoon session. This training will help you better understand the e-PCR system and will allow you to take the information back to others in your agency. The Office of EMS and Trauma will grant each attendee 4 hours of continuing education to apply toward their license renewal. Contact Chris or Craig at 334-206-5383 or via email at [emsis@adph.state.al.us](mailto:emsis@adph.state.al.us) to schedule your training. ❄️



\*\*The news release below also applies to all EMS agencies.\*\*

**For your information, this release will be distributed to the news media statewide.**

## ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The RSA Tower, 201 Monroe Street, P.O. Box 303017, Montgomery, AL 36130-3017

(334) 206-5300 • FAX (334) 206-5534 Web Site: <http://www.adph.org>

Get free supplies for organization pandemic plans

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cindy Lesinger  
Angela Stanley  
(334) 206-3394

The Alabama Department of Public Health's Center for Emergency Preparedness Pandemic Influenza program has purchased supplies to encourage organizations to learn about and plan for a pandemic influenza event. An influenza pandemic is a global disease outbreak from a new influenza virus not seen in humans before.

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson said, "Preparing our state for the possibility of a global influenza pandemic is a huge responsibility, and it is one which depends on cooperation of everyone involved to be successful."

Organizations such as churches, banks, grocery stores or gas stations that write a

Continuity of Operations Plan and receive pandemic preparedness education from Public Health are eligible to receive free supplies. The plan must include the specific names, resources, supplies and descriptions of how the organization will continue to operate during a pandemic.

Organizations that already have a plan in place may need to add a few specific elements to ensure it covers a pandemic. A pandemic plan is different from other emergency plans in several ways. For example, all organizations may have up to 40 percent absenteeism, which will affect all counties and sectors at about the same time, and there may be economic and social disruptions.

There are two free supply programs available. Free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies include items such as masks, gloves, sterilizing products and face shields. The free Comfort Care Center (CCC) supply includes fever/pain reducer medications, electrolyte drink, antidiarrheal medication, inflatable mattresses, disposable pillows and blankets.

The operational plans will be reviewed by local public health area emergency preparedness teams who will also provide the free education. For more information visit [www.adph.org/pandemicflu](http://www.adph.org/pandemicflu), or call 1-866-264-4073 and ask about the free supplies.

### TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

East Alabama EMS will be sponsoring the below listed continuing education classes that may be listed in the newsletter. All the classes are free and provide 4 hours of con ed. To register, contact our office or go to our website at [eastalabamaems.com](http://eastalabamaems.com).

April 10, 2009	10:30 - 2:30	Abdominal/GI Issues	Russell Medical Center Classroom	Alexander City
May 16, 2009	8:00 - 5:00	Annual Conference	Talladega Speed Dome	Lincoln, AL
June 12, 2009	10:30 - 2:30	ATV/Boating/Motorcycle Trauma	East Alabama EMS	Lincoln, AL
July 10, 2009	10:30 - 2:30	Stroke	East Alabama EMS	Lincoln, AL
August 14, 2009	10:30 - 2:30	Cardiac	TBA	Gadsden, AL
September 11, 2009	10:30 - 2:30	Contagious/Airborne Diseases	East Alabama EMS	Lincoln, AL

## INDIVIDUAL LICENSURE UPDATES AND REQUIREMENTS

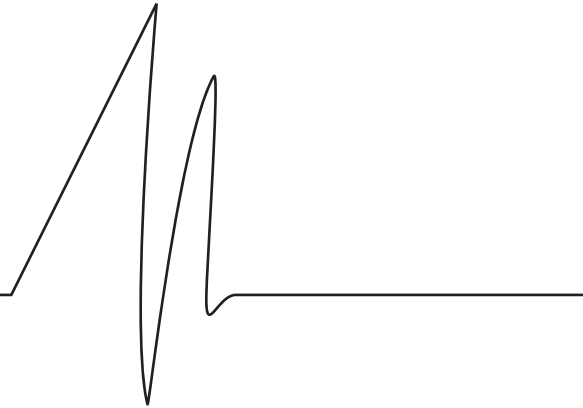
EMT License 'On-Line Renewal' is available on our website, [www.adph.org/ems](http://www.adph.org/ems).

- ① Click on Licensure and the Online Renewal link is at the top of the page.
  - » **Please remember** that the end of the 2009 license renewal period is March 31, 2009 and the online renewal link will not be available after this date.
- ② All documentation proving continuing education must be **typed** in order to receive credit for licensing.
- ③ A **"typed"** CPR card must accompany every application except "Inactive"
- ⑤ To be an "Active" Paramedic or Intermediate, you must be a member of a licensed EMS Service

## PROVIDER SERVICE NEWS

Provider Services in Regions 1 (North), Region 3 (BREMSS), and Region 4 (West) have license renewal dates of June 30. Information regarding licensure renewal should be delivered to each of these services by press time or shortly thereafter. If your service is up for renewal, the renewal application needs to be submitted to the Office of EMS & Trauma at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the license. Please remember when an application is submitted late and the service does not have a current license as of July 1, the service cannot operate until the license is renewed.

ADPH Office of EMS & Trauma is in the process of implementing the electronic Provider Service application. As soon as this application is on-line and operable, all services will be notified that the application is available for use. ❄



The Alabama Legislature passed a joint house resolution signed by Governor Bob Riley on March 5th, declaring June 19, 2009 as Alabama Firefighter and Emergency Medical Personnel Day. This date coincides with the Alabama Sports Festival's Opening Ceremonies at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex which will be televised live statewide beginning at 7:00 p.m.

During these opening ceremonies, firefighters and emergency medical personnel with a minimum of ten years of service and all firefighters and EMS personnel killed in the line of duty, regardless of their length of service (represented by a family member), will be presented the Medal of Service or the Medal of Sacrifice. Both medals are designed and minted exclusively for this special ceremony. The honoree must be present at the opening ceremonies to receive the medal.

For more information, visit [www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com) and go to the Honoring Our Heroes section or email [heroes@alagames.com](mailto:heroes@alagames.com). Registration can be completed online or you can print off the registration form and submit it by fax or mail. You are encouraged to register online if possible. The deadline for registration is June 1. Early registration would be appreciated.

It is important to share this memorandum and the websites with everyone who works out of your facility. This is an opportunity for our profession to receive a much deserved recognition, which will be viewed statewide on live television. Thanks for your willingness to get the information out.

For additional posters, you can go to [www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com) and go to the Honoring Our Heroes section. You can download and print in color as many additional posters as you need.



# Alabama Sports Festival XXVII

A Non-Profit Organization

P.O. Box 20327

Montgomery, Alabama 36120-0327

(334) 280-0065 • (800) 467-0422 • Fax (334) 280-0988

Website: [www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com)

## 2009 STATE GAMES IN BIRMINGHAM JUNE 19-21

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2009

Release #: 20090324

CONTACT: Andrew J. Richardson

Communications & Development Director

(334) 280-0065

[andrew.richardson@alagames.com](mailto:andrew.richardson@alagames.com)

### Subject: Firefighters & EMS Personnel to be honored at 2009 Opening Ceremonies

Montgomery, AL - Alabama firefighters and emergency medical personnel will be honored on live statewide television at the Alabama Sports Festival State Games XXVII Opening Ceremonies, June 19, 2009, 7:00 p.m. at the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex Arena.

The Alabama legislature passed a joint resolution, signed by Gov. Bob Riley, declaring June 19, 2009, as Alabama Firefighter and Emergency Medical Personnel Day. This date coincides with the Alabama Sports Festival's Opening Ceremonies, where the Alabama Sports Festival will continue its *Honoring Our Heroes* program by recognizing the service and sacrifice of Alabama's firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

Firefighters and EMS personnel with a minimum of ten years of service will be eligible to receive the Medal of Service. The Medal of Service is for active, volunteer, retired, disabled, or deceased firefighters and EMS personnel. The Medal of Sacrifice will be presented on behalf of all firefighters and EMS personnel killed in the line of duty, regardless of their length of service, and will be presented to a family member. Both medals are designed and minted exclusively for this special ceremony.

In order to receive the Medal of Service or the Medal of Sacrifice, the qualifying recipient or their representative must register before June 1, 2009 and be present at the Alabama Sports Festival Opening Ceremonies. Registration can be completed online by going to [www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com), and clicking on the *Honoring Our Heroes* section.

All Alabama firefighters and EMS personnel with fewer than 10 years of service, as well as all support personnel within their agencies, along with their families, are invited to attend the ceremonies free of charge to show support for those receiving medals. Personnel are encouraged to wear their uniforms and to arrive no later than 6:45 p.m.

The Alabama Sports Festival's *Honoring Our Heroes* series is part of its commitment to teach Alabama student-athletes the sacrifices made by others to keep our country a free and safe society. In 2000, the ASF honored Korean War veterans and family members of those disabled or killed in action in that war; in 2002, the ASF honored New York City firefighters and police officers for their dedicated service surrounding the September 11, 2001 tragedies; in 2007, the ASF honored Alabama military service members who were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11 and family members of those disabled or killed in action in the war; and in 2008, the ASF honored Alabama law enforcement officers.

The Alabama Sports Festival, now in its 27th year, is a non-profit organization that started at the request of the United States Olympic Committee and is part of a nationwide network of state games programs. The ASF teaches the importance of academics and good citizenship through statewide, Olympic-style athletic competition. For more information on the Alabama Sports Festival or *Honoring Our Heroes - Firefighters & EMS Personnel*, visit [www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com) or e-mail [heroes@alagames.com](mailto:heroes@alagames.com).

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-30-

**27 Consecutive Years of Reaching the Leaders of Tomorrow...Today**  
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# ATTENTION!

*Honoring All Alabama Firefighters and  
Emergency Medical Personnel*

*You may be eligible to receive the  
Medal of Service or the Medal of Sacrifice*

*To be presented at...*

**Alabama Sports Festival  
State Games  
Opening Ceremonies**

**Birmingham Jefferson  
Convention Complex Arena  
June 19, 2009, 7:00 PM**

***Televised Live Statewide!***

**WBMA - ABC 33/40 Birmingham  
WDFX - TV34 Fox Dothan  
WAFF - TV48 NBC Huntsville  
WKRG - TV5 CBS Mobile  
WSFA - TV12 NBC Montgomery**

***Get complete Information  
and register online at  
[www.alagames.com](http://www.alagames.com)  
Go to "Honoring Our Heroes"***

***or for more information call 800-467-0422***