



## MEMORANDUM

---

Date: April 1, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

Via: Brian L. Barroso  
City Manager

From: Keith W. Hernandez  
EMS Chief, KWFD

Subject: Ordinance Amending Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transport Rates

---

### **Introduction**

Staff recommends adopting an ordinance to amend City EMS transport rates, updating the fee schedule to reflect current service costs, aligning with other Florida municipal EMS systems, and aiding the long-term sustainability of EMS for Key West residents and visitors.

### **Background**

The Key West Fire Department EMS Division provides 24-hour Advanced Life Support emergency medical response and ambulance transport services to the City's permanent population as well as the significant visitor and transient population that contributes to the community's economy.

As an island community, Key West experiences unique operational challenges, including:

- Higher personnel and staffing costs
- Increased fleet maintenance and replacement costs
- Elevated fuel and supply logistics expenses
- Limited regional redundancy for mutual aid resources
- Increased call volume during peak tourism periods and special events

Over the past decade, EMS operations have experienced significant cost growth related to personnel wages and benefits, medical equipment and technology upgrades, pharmaceutical costs, ambulance acquisition and maintenance, and regulatory compliance requirements.

A review of EMS transport rates across comparable Florida municipal EMS agencies indicates that the City of Key West’s current rates are below many prevailing market benchmarks, particularly for Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) emergency transport.

The proposed adjustments represent a rate realignment after more than ten years without modification. Even with these adjustments, the City’s rates remain within a reasonable range compared to similar municipal EMS providers throughout Florida.

EMS transport rates represent the maximum allowable charges. Actual reimbursement amounts are determined by Medicare and Medicaid fee schedules and payments received from private insurance providers in accordance with applicable billing regulations.

**Procurement**

This item does not involve the procurement of goods or services and does not require the execution of a contract. Upon adoption of the ordinance, the revised EMS transport rates will be incorporated into the City’s established fee schedule and billing system. No additional appropriations are required.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Commission approve the ordinance amending the EMS transport rates for the Key West Fire Department as presented. Approval of this ordinance will:

- Update EMS transport fees for the first time since 2015
- Improve cost recovery for emergency medical services
- Align the City’s EMS rates with comparable Florida municipal EMS systems
- Support the continued delivery of high-quality emergency medical care to residents and visitors as a vital investment in public health, readiness, and community safety.

**Exhibit A**

**EMS Transport Rate Comparison and Proposed Adjustments**

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>Proposed Rate</b>	<b>Dollar Change</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
BLS Emergency Base	\$600	\$800	+\$200	+33.3%
ALS Emergency Base	\$750	\$950	+\$200	+26.7%
ALS-2 Base	\$950	\$1,100	+\$150	+15.8%
Mileage (per mile)	\$14.50	\$18.50	+\$4.00	+27.6%

*(Ord. No. 15-04, §1, adopted March 3, 2015)*