

**EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)**

Concept and Consultation Document

Integration of EMS Sarah Baartman District into the Electronic Call Taking and Dispatch System at EMS Gqerbha

Date: 29 May 2025

Proposed Implementation Start Date: 1 July 2025 or soonest.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Cape Department of Health, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), has embarked on a strategic initiative to modernise its communication and dispatch operations by implementing an **Electronic Call Taking and Dispatch System (ECTDS)**, aligned with the Presidential drive on the **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**. This forms part of a broader objective to leverage technology for improved service delivery, operational efficiency, and patient response times.

The system has been fully implemented at the **Gqeberha EMS Station** and has shown promising outcomes in terms of efficiency, real-time data utilisation, and call handling capacity.

As part of the next phase of implementation, the Department proposes to **integrate the Sarah Baartman District EMS call-taking and dispatch operations into the Gqeberha-based system** through a **phased transition** process.

2. OBJECTIVES

- Improve service coordination and response times across the Sarah Baartman District.
- Leverage digital technologies to enhance real-time tracking, data analysis, and incident response.
- Centralise call-taking and dispatching to ensure uniform standards of care and system-wide integration.
- Support the Department's mandate under the 4IR to digitalise healthcare and improve emergency services.

3. PHASED INTEGRATION PLAN

The integration will follow a **phased approach**, prioritising continuity of service and minimising disruption. The proposed sequence is as follows:

Phase	Centre	Planned Timeline
Phase 1	Graaff-Reinet	Start July 2025
Phase 2	Makhanda (Grahamstown)	Mid July 2025
Phase 3	Humansdorp	End July 2025

Each phase will involve:

- Infrastructure alignment and technical integration.
- Staff orientation and training.
- Final system testing and changeover.
- Ongoing support post-integration.

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

To ensure full operationalisation of the ECTDS, it will be necessary to **transfer twenty (20) selected EMS communications staff** from the Sarah Baartman centres to the **centralised call-taking centre in EMS Gqeberha**. Key considerations include:

- **Affected staff** will be formally consulted and supported through the transition process.
- Transfers will be in accordance with existing policies and applicable labour laws.
- **Skills development and training** will be provided to all impacted staff.
- Accommodation and travel arrangements, where necessary, will be discussed as part of the implementation support measures.

5. BENEFITS OF THE SYSTEM

- **Centralised coordination** allows for uniform, real-time tracking and resource allocation across districts.
- **Improved call efficiency** and data capture reduce delays in emergency responses.
- **Automated logging and analytics** enable better oversight and strategic planning.
- **Alignment with 4IR goals**, ensuring that public health services are technologically enabled and future-ready.
- **Professional development** opportunities for staff through training in advanced dispatch systems.
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6. ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

This document serves as the basis for structured engagement with **Organised Labour and EMS Management**. The Department is committed to **transparent, fair, and inclusive consultation** throughout the implementation process.

Key milestones in the consultation process include:

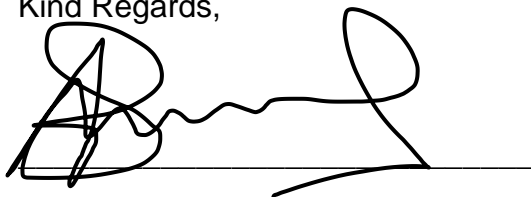
Date	Activity
29 th May	Formal consultation sessions with unions
3 rd – 14 th June	Station discussions with affected shift staff
3 rd – 14 th June	Union Consultation with members
14 th – 30 th June	Finalisation of staff transition plans
1 July onwards	Phased implementation begins

7. CONCLUSION

The integration of Sarah Baartman District EMS into the Electronic Call Taking and Dispatch System at EMS Gqermba marks a transformative step toward a more modern, efficient, and responsive emergency service. It reflects our joint commitment – as management and labour – to delivering high-quality healthcare services using the best available tools and technology.

We invite feedback, proposals, and collaborative engagement from all stakeholders to ensure a smooth and equitable transition for both staff and the communities we serve.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AK Munilal', written over a horizontal line.

Mr AK Munilal
Eastern Cape Department of Health
Emergency Medical Services
Date: 29 May 2025