

NEMTAC® CERTIFIED STRETCHER OPERATOR™ (CSO)

Ensuring Safety | Promoting Accountability | Enhancing Reliability

Purpose

Establishes minimum competency requirements for safe stretcher operations in non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). Focused on reducing injury risk through standardized, team-based execution and validated skills performance.

Program Model

Hybrid Certification Program

- **Online Education (Required First)**
Foundational knowledge, safety principles, equipment awareness
- **In-Person Skills Validation (Required)**
Instructor-led evaluation of required competencies

Certification requires successful completion of both components.

Core Competencies

- Body mechanics and injury prevention
- Equipment operation and readiness
- Safe lifting, loading, and transport
- Team-based stretcher operations
- Environmental hazard identification and mitigation
- Communication and passenger interaction
- Situational awareness and risk control

Required Skills Validation

Participants must demonstrate:

- **Team Operations:** Head-end/foot-end coordination
- **Transfers:** Standing pivot and lateral transfer principles
- **Securement:** Proper restraint application/removal sequence
- **Movement:** Doorways, obstacles, and 180-degree turns
- **Stability:** Wheel alignment and tip prevention

- **Communication:** Clear, professional, safety-focused interaction

Failure to demonstrate competency results in non-completion.

Safety Principles

- Maintain stretcher control at all times
- Align wheels when stationary to prevent tipping
- Position destination surface slightly lower during transfers
- Adapt to environmental hazards (uneven terrain, weather, debris)
- Use only properly secured, manufacturer-approved equipment

Certification

Awarded upon:

- Completion of online education
- Successful in-person skills validation

Validity: Two (2) years

Outcomes

- Reduced passenger and crew injury risk
- Standardized stretcher operation practices
- Improved operational consistency and accountability
- Enhanced safety and quality across NEMT services