



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

---

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JUNE 16, 2026**  
**FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL**  
**SUBJECT: INTRODUCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY ADOPT REVISIONS TO RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 5.66, REGARDING AMBULANCES**

**ISSUE:**

Introduce and subsequently adopt revisions to Riverside Municipal Code Chapter 5.66 regarding Ambulances. The amendments modernize definitions, update franchise and permit requirements, and enhance operational standards for ambulance services within the City of Riverside.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council introduce an ordinance amending Chapter 5.66 of the Riverside Municipal Code regarding Ambulances.

**BACKGROUND:**

Chapter 5.66 of the Riverside, California Code of Ordinances regulates ambulance services under Title 5 - Business Taxes, Licenses, and Regulations. It establishes that all ambulance services operating within the city must have a valid franchise or permit granted by the City Council or Administrator, with mandatory accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Definitions for terms like ALS, BLS, CCT, and franchisee are provided. The application process requires detailed information about the applicant's business, equipment, personnel, rates, and insurance, with permits or franchises granted for up to five years. Applicants must meet state and local EMS standards, including equipment maintenance, personnel training, and continuous 24/7 service availability, with exceptions for special events. Ambulance rates must be approved by the city and increases above 5% require special approval. Audits can be conducted to verify revenue and costs. Inspections of ambulances are conducted to ensure compliance with safety and operational standards, with fees assessed as necessary. During emergencies, franchisees are required to provide necessary resources upon request. Complaint procedures allow users to report excessive charges or unsatisfactory services, which are investigated by the Administrator. The ordinance outlines enforcement measures, including inspections, suspensions, revocations, and appeal processes. Public hearings are conducted for disputes regarding franchise status. Additionally, the chapter maintains severability, ensuring the remaining provisions remain in effect if any part is deemed invalid.

The last revision to Chapter 5.66 was in 2020. At that time, Section 5.66.060(D) was amended to include an appellate remedy for applicants who were denied a permit or had their permit

revoked or suspended. This provision allows applicants to file an appeal in writing with the City Clerk within 15 days of notification, outlining the grounds for the appeal, with a hearing to be conducted before the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The proposed amendments reflect the need to address evolving operational requirements, incorporate compliance with current state and local EMS standards, and enhance oversight to maintain high-quality ambulance services.

The key updates in the proposed amendments include:

### **1. 5.66.020 Franchise / permits:**

- The proposed amendment in 5.66.020 section 5 introduces a provision allowing unpermitted ambulances to operate upon approval of the Administrator in situations where significant time delays may adversely impact patient care. This ensures that when permitted ambulance services are verified to be delayed or unable to provide the required level of service, alternative arrangements can be authorized to address urgent medical needs effectively.

This change aims to mitigate the risk of care delays in critical situations by granting the Administrator the flexibility to approve supplemental or alternative ambulance services. The provision prioritizes patient care and addresses scenarios such as unexpected service interruptions, increased demand, or logistical challenges faced by permitted ambulance providers.

### **2. 5.66.040 Application for a franchise or extension of a franchise:**

- The current ordinance requires applicants for ambulance service permits to verify their current accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). This ensures that ambulance providers meet nationally recognized standards for quality and safety in emergency medical services.

The amendment allows the Ambulance Administrator to grant a variance for applicants who demonstrate a commitment to achieving accreditation within six months to 18-months of receiving their permit. Failure to achieve CAAS accreditation within the specified timeframe will result in the removal of the permit.

### **3. 5.66.050 Processing of application:**

- As part of the application evaluation, the Administrator will prepare a detailed report. The proposed change increases the timeframe for the Administrator to prepare a detailed report for Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee from (14) to (45) days. The increased timeframe will allow sufficient time to complete the report and to allow for changes in the committee schedule, which has been found to be problematic.

### **4. 5.66.090 Extension of franchises/permits**

- The revised version aligns the ordinance with the rest of the document, allowing the Ambulance Franchise Administrator the authority to extend the

franchise/permit holder agreement for up to three years, not to exceed the maximum term limitation of the City Charter.

**5. 5.66.180 Ambulance rates**

- The proposal to adjust the percent increase limit from 5% to 10% aligns with Riverside County's policy framework for managing rate changes. This change acknowledges the reality of escalating costs and offers greater flexibility for meeting operational needs while maintaining a structured review process.

**6. 5.66.195 Permit for ambulances:**

- The revised version would state: "Each permit holder shall annually submit for inspection to the Administrator 50 percent of its fleet of ambulances operating in the City, such that all ambulances of a franchisee operating in the City are inspected on a biennial basis." This change provides clarity, as "biennial" explicitly conveys the intended two-year rotation and avoids misinterpretation that could lead to non-compliance. It also ensures accountability, as the clear schedule aligns all stakeholders on expectations that the entire fleet is subject to inspection.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact related to these revisions.

Prepared by:	Chuck Tasker, Division Chief – Special Operations
Approved by:	Steve McKinster, Fire Chief
Certified as to availability of funds:	Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
Approved by:	Edward Enriquez, Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reibold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Ordinance