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Ask the CAMTS

## Infrastructure

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We hear much in the news about the crumbling infrastructure in the United States regarding roads, bridges, and, I might add, our moral compass. Thankfully, the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) does not have a crumbling infrastructure, and this is the main strength of CAMTS. Our foundation is built on board membership representing professional organizations in every discipline involved in medical transport. This was our concept from the beginning when there were 5 member organizations and continues until today with 21 member organizations.

There is 1 representative from each member organization. Board representatives are diverse but experienced and experts in their specific backgrounds, including nurses (2 with PhDs), paramedics, pilots, mechanics, physicians, respiratory therapists, communications specialists, emergency medical service managers, and administrators. There are European and Asian board members on the CAMTS Global Board of Directors. Board members are volunteers and have full-time careers in medical transport. Most have over 20 years of experience, and many are authors and researchers. They represent private companies, hospitals, and public services in all parts of the United States, including state emergency medical services, the United States Transportation Command, and a National Aeronautics and Space Administration medical director who represents the Aerospace Medical Association.

This diversity of experience and backgrounds provides a robust basis for the accreditation process that begins with a program applying for accreditation and

undergoing a site visit, resulting in an accreditation decision.

I am continually amazed at the dedication of board members, and I feel they do not get enough recognition for their time and efforts. Many understand the accreditation process, but I want to review the board member's role in conducting the business of accreditation.

There are 2 board members assigned to a new service and 1 board member assigned to a program reaccruiting. The tedious application process with its many presurvey attachments (now made easier with the online process) undergoes extensive review by the executive staff, assigned board member(s), and approved site surveyors. Documents, policies, and other materials are requested so that site surveyors can spend their time on-site touring and interviewing and asking questions based on the materials submitted. The executive staff will target and document areas on the spreadsheet we call the Standards Compliance Tool for the site surveyor to ask about based on a thorough prereview. Prereviews can take up to 36 hours to complete based on the complexity of the program. There can be up to 180 attachments to review if the program provides rotor wing, fixed wing, and surface operations.

Board members are assigned to review specific programs and present a report to the full board. The board member presenter was cleared on conflicts of interest before accepting an assignment, and he or she is the only one who knows the identity of the program. All programs on the agenda are identified by a 6-digit number, and board members who have a conflict of interest will be excused from that deliberation.

The board report that is presented was initiated by the lead site surveyor in a PowerPoint (Microsoft Corp, Redmond, WA) format. Board members are required to review all the materials including the report and schedule a time to speak with the site surveyors before they present to the full board. We have found this to be a very important part of the process because we want to make sure there is little room for misinterpretation between what the site surveyor saw and then conveyed in the report.

This does not guarantee we get everything right in the final letter that the program receives. There is still room for misinterpretation between the report and the accreditation letter. Again, we try to be concise and accurate, but there are times we may not succeed. That is why there is an appeal process. We honor every written appeal received within 30 days. Appealing an accreditation decision is taken to the board and discussed. Some appeals are denied, and some are upheld.

Our internal quality management process tracks and trends these specifically so that we continue to improve our process. The board understands and respects the work that goes into applying for accreditation and above all strives to be fair and consistent.

For a complete listing of the member organizations that make up the Board of Directors and the current representatives, please see the [www.camts.org](http://www.camts.org) and [www.camtsglobal.org](http://www.camtsglobal.org) websites.

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