



**ACCREDITATION
AGRÉMENT**
CANADA

Accreditation Report

Qmentum Global™ for Canadian
Accreditation Program

Associated Ambulance

Report Issued: January 02, 2026

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About Accreditation Canada

Accreditation Canada is a global, not-for-profit organization with a vision for safer care and a healthier world. Our people-centred programs and services have been setting the bar for quality across the health ecosystem for more than 60 years. We continue to grow in our reach and impact. Accreditation Canada empowers and enables organizations to meet national and global standards with innovative programs that are customized to local needs. Accreditation Canada's assessment programs and services support the delivery of safe, high-quality care in health systems, hospitals, laboratories and diagnostic centres, long-term care, rehabilitation centres, primary care, home, and community settings. Our specialized accreditation and certification programs support safe, high-quality care for specific populations, health conditions, and health professions.

About the Accreditation Report

The Organization identified in this Accreditation Report (the "**Organization**") has participated in Accreditation Canada's Qmentum Global™ for Canadian Accreditation program.

As part of this program, the Organization has partaken in continuous quality improvement activities and assessments, including an on-site survey from November 30, 2025 to December 5, 2025. This Accreditation Report reflects the Organization's information and data, and Accreditation Canada's assessments, as of those dates.

Information from the assessments, as well as other information and data obtained from the Organization, was used to produce this Report. Accreditation Canada relied on the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Organization to plan and conduct its on-site assessments and to produce this Report. It is the Organization's responsibility to promptly disclose any and all incidents to Accreditation Canada that could impact its accreditation decision for the Organization.

Program Overview

The Qmentum Global Program enables your organization to continuously improve quality of care through the sustainable delivery of high-quality care experiences and health outcomes. The program provides your organization with standards, survey instruments, assessment methods and an actioning planning feature that were designed to promote continuous learning and improvement, and a client support model for on-going support and advice from dedicated advisors.

Your organization participates in a four-year accreditation cycle that spreads accreditation activities over four years supporting the shift from a one-time assessment while helping your organization maintain its focus on planning, implementing, and assessing quality and improvements. It encourages your organization to adopt accreditation activities in everyday practices.

Each year of the accreditation cycle includes activities that your organization will complete. Accreditation Canada provides ongoing support to your organization throughout the accreditation cycle. When your organization completes year 4 of the accreditation cycle, Accreditation Canada's Accreditation Decision Committee determines your organization's accreditation status based on the program's accreditation decision guidelines. The assessment results and accreditation decision are documented in a final report stating the accreditation status of your organization. After an accreditation decision is made, your organization enters year 1 of a new cycle, building on the actions and learnings of past accreditation cycles, in keeping with quality improvement principles.

The assessment manual (Accreditation Canada Manual) which supports all assessment methods (self-assessment, attestation, and on-site assessment), is organized into applicable Standards and ROPs/RSPs. To promote alignment with the assessment manual (Accreditation Canada Manual), assessment results and surveyor findings are organized by Standard, within this report.

Additional report contents include a comprehensive executive summary, the organization's accreditation decision, locations assessed during the on-site assessment, required organizational practices results, and conclusively, People-Centered Care and Quality Improvement Overviews.

Executive Summary

About the Organization

Associated Ambulance (ASSAM) has been operating since 1977 in Alberta and is the largest contracted Emergency Medical Service (EMS) organization in the province. The service is privately owned.

Since 2012, the organization has been contracted by Alberta Health Services to provide Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) emergency services in twenty-four communities across south, central and north geographic zones covering approximately 135000 square kilometres in Alberta. Service is provided using a fleet of ninety-nine transport vehicles. ASSAM has also provided non-emergency medical transportation for medically stable patients, using non-paramedic staff.

For emergency response, ASSAM staffs each station with a contractually defined mix of EMS service models using assembled crews, as well as the Core-Flex staffing model.

Each EMS station provides comfortable crew quarters for staff, in addition to covered bays for EMS unit storage.

In 2024, ASSAM was awarded a third contract with Alberta Emergency Health Services. In April, ASSAM began a dedicated, five-year inter-facility transport (IFT) contract, and has established dedicated IFT units in Acheson and Red Deer. The IFT service is staffed by BLS and Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) providers.

ASSAM operates under two collective agreements: Health Services Association of Alberta (HSAA) as well as Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Edmonton IFT and MaMeO Beach stations are not currently unionized. The organization is currently in labour contract negotiations with bargaining units.

Surveyor Overview of Team Observations

Operating under visionary leadership and a strong leadership team, Associated Ambulance (ASSAM) provides professional, compassionate emergency medical services and inter-facility transportation to patients and clients in Alberta. With a staff of approximately 450 Advance Care, Primary Care and Emergency Medical Responders delivering front-line services.

Service is provided from state-of-the-art facilities. The corporate base in Acheson (11292 - 269 St) runs a twenty-three-unit IFT (inter-facility transport) service. It is also the site of the leadership and support staff, including a dedicated workplace health and safety representative, two schedulers and shift supervisors. ASSAM has also acquired property across the street from the corporate office ("Acheson II at 11225 - 269 St) where there is a training classroom for onboarding and ongoing training, such as ACLS certification. This building is also home to the company's logistics department, where all equipment, consumables and items like staff apparel are located. The site is undergoing renovations and is readying to open a dedicated vehicle service centre to do both scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on their fleet.

Workforce shortages across all training levels cause employers to be innovative in their recruitment and retention strategies. ASSAM recognizes this need and has expanded their web and social media presence to support these activities. In addition, the organization offers financial support for tuition for staff who wish to increase their training level, and retention bonuses. ASSAM is proud of its ability to reinvest in its staff, whether it's through the station environment, education, or long service recognition.

ASSAM staff and leaders are held in high regard by community partners. Community Partners appreciate the addition of the Regional Support Supervisors (RSSs) and emphatically express the desire for these positions to stay long term.

Health care system capacity and flow is a challenge across the entire system. Community partners see the challenges and are not all aware of solutions within the control of ASSAM leadership, and those which are restricted by their service agreement (contract with Alberta Emergency Health Services). For example, as the partners suggest that "more trucks" are the answer to address staff fatigue, they are not aware of the strains that the Core-Flex staffing model places on staff work-life balance, or the inability of ASSAM to put vehicles in service. Offload delays at emergency departments are another service barrier. ASSAM has addressed this issue with the introduction of an escalation pathway to support units stuck in offload delays.

ASSAM has worked very hard to respond to feedback and improvement opportunities since their 2021 survey. The responsiveness is apparent in their compliance to the standards during this visit. Continued effort to maintain a high level of compliance will affix ASSAM as a leading EMS and IFT service provider.

Key Opportunities and Areas of Excellence

Key Opportunities

Associated Ambulance (ASSAM) has demonstrated its responsiveness to on-site feedback from the survey team by producing documents that were identified as gaps. An example of this is the Procurement policy and procedure. There was a policy and procedure being used, but it was not documented.

In addition, there are other initiatives that are underway, but not complete. The organization is encouraged to ensure all initiatives that are in progress get across the implementation finish line (e.g., ethics training, Diversity Equity and Inclusion policy, and the hazmat exposure protocol). The organization needs to prioritize which policy/procedure/tool requires awareness of the document, and which can benefit from a more formalized training and discussion, to help ensure finite time is spent on the right initiatives.

Specific to the Ethics Framework that has been developed, in addition to a training and implementation strategy, the organization is strongly encouraged to condense the ethics tool into a practical reference sheet or reference card for staff to consult when needed in the moment.

Hand hygiene was regularly observed by surveyors when the team was providing patient care. However, hand hygiene compliance surveillance is not routinely performed nor reported at the station level across the organization.

Additionally, the organization is encouraged to assess the effectiveness of its vehicle and equipment cleaning processes for effectiveness.

Pending changes to the provincial regulatory college for entry-to-practice education programs may challenge the organization regarding staffing. Exploring recruitment strategies in light of education program changes is needed to address staffing shortages.

Perspectives of clients and families in discussions and decisions about the services and equipment used can provide meaningful and valuable feedback to the organization. Although there are specific examples of how the team has gone out of their way to provide patient-centred care, the organization is challenged to incorporate patient- and family-centred care on a more routine basis. Consider assembling a focus group to solicit feedback on a new piece of patient equipment or client feedback on a new policy being implemented. As the organization obtains the user's perspective, consider the impact on decision making if the patient the equipment is attached to also offered an opinion.

Areas of Excellence

Associated Ambulance is led by a visionary owner supported by a caring, committed senior leadership team. The organization is guided by its strong strategic and operational planning documents. The organization is encouraged to proceed with its plan to incorporate business cases into its senior leadership discussions to ensure new initiatives are in alignment with the strategic direction of the organization.

Recent additions of duty supervisors at the operations leadership table along with Regional Support Supervisors provide a better work-life balance across the two positions in each zone as well as introducing a potential succession pathway for others with aspirations for a leadership role in the organization.

In addition, the organization has also invested in a new quality and staff development coordinator, with a focus on clinical quality assurance. As this program ramps up, the department will be challenged to ensure all staff receive random but timely PCR feedback, whether it is reinforcing good practices or offering opportunities for improvement.

The organization has invested in a Logistics and Fleet Management team, supported by a purpose-driven software program (FleetIO).

Community partners are very satisfied with the support they receive from ASSAM. As well, clients are grateful and speak favourably about the care they have received. During the on-site survey, a member of the survey team attended a meeting between a Drayton Valley EMS crew and a patient in their care who had experienced a cardiac arrest.

The leaders in the organization genuinely care about the staff, and the staff in turn have a genuine care for the patients and clients. As a result, patient- and family-centred care is embedded in the culture. As the organization continues to grow, it will be important to ensure that family-centred care remains a priority.

People-Centred Care

In reviewing the Strategic Plan for 2025–2029, it is encouraging to see that Associated Ambulance focuses on goals related to people-centred care, partnerships, employee wellness, and quality in the health care system.

It is clearly evident that the organization has adopted a people-centred care approach that embeds people-centred care culture and practices throughout the organization. During group discussion relating to People and Family-Centred Care, staff identified a patient-centred experience and practice that speaks to the heart of how the organization engages with patients and families. Leadership of the MaMeO Beach station near the 4 Band Reserve, which is an extension of the Maskwacis Reserve, shared the following examples of how people-centred care is put into practice by EMS crews.

The local crews have developed relationships with these communities and are gaining a better understanding of their culture, including end-of-life traditions and practices. Staff explained that crews, where appropriate, allow family members to begin their traditional end-of-life practices while at the scene. This relationship has grown to the point that the crews are invited to attend annual feasts celebrating the memory of these deceased community members.

Another example emerged where rural crews participate in informal debriefs when at the hospital and family want to say goodbye to a loved one who has passed away. Ambulance crews stay with the family and provide emotional support as they begin the grieving process. Surveyors agree that these practical, real-life experiences help build trust and respect between EMS providers and the community members they serve.

Staff also provided an example of the benefits of local crews being members living and working in local communities. During the Jasper wildfires, for example, the town evacuated knowing that Fire and EMS were staying behind to try and protect community properties. After the community was allowed to return, the same crews were there to welcome the people back home. Community members acknowledged that the presence of the EMS staff as dedicated community members provided a sense of comfort and security to their day-to-day lives.

Staff expressed that as a result of these shared lived experiences, community members are more comfortable engaging with EMS. Staff provided examples where, following a fatality event to which the ambulance crews responded, family and friends dropped off thank-you cards, flowers, and chocolates as an expression of gratitude for their care and kindness during their time of need.

Surveyors agree that these shared experiences help raise awareness about the organization's role in the community and provide community members with support and psychosocial debriefing opportunities following emergencies or disasters to facilitate recovery. Staff provided numerous practical examples where the organization helps clients and families navigate the health and social services system to get the care they need.

Quality Improvement Overview

The Quality Improvement framework of Associated Ambulance (ASSAM) outlines the organization's commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, patient-centred mobile health services. It serves as a strategic guide for quality improvements and initiatives, focusing on continuous evaluation, learning, and adherence to industry standards. The framework is built on five strategic pillars.

By implementing this framework, ASSAM aims to align its operations with the evolving health care landscape, improve client care services, and ensure the well-being of employees while maintaining high standards of professionalism and safety.

By fostering collaboration, transparency, and open communication, the organization ensures that stakeholders play an integral role in shaping and improving its quality processes.

The QA team, which recently added a position dedicated to PCR review in April 2025, is working to implement regular, timely routine call reviews for all front-line staff. Staff report receiving feedback when requested, but the regular and routine review will be important to inform areas for improvement that are currently being missed.

The organization has metrics that they report monthly. However, these are not shared across the organization. Hand hygiene compliance is a good example of a metric that should be of interest to all staff, given the relationship between hand washing and disease transmission.

Accreditation Decision

Associated Ambulance's accreditation decision is:

Accredited with Exemplary Standing

The organization has exceeded the fundamental requirements of the accreditation program.

Locations Assessed during On-Site Assessment

The following locations were assessed during the organization's on-site assessment:

- Acheson
- Drayton Valley Station
- Ma Me O Beach Station
- Rimbey Station
- Sylvan Lake Station

¹Location sampling was applied to multi-site single-service and multi-location multi-service organizations.

Required Organizational Practices

Required Organizational Practices (ROP/RSP) and Required Service Practices (RSP) are essential practices that an organization must have in place to enhance client safety and minimize risk. ROP/RSP contain multiple criteria, which are called Tests for Compliance (TFC).

Table 1: Summary of the Organization's ROPs/RSPs

ROP/RSP Name	Standard(s)	# TFC Rating Met	% TFC Met
Infusion Pump Safety	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	6 / 6	100.0%
Hand-hygiene Education and Training	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	1 / 1	100.0%
Hand-hygiene Compliance	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	3 / 3	100.0%
Reprocessing	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	2 / 2	100.0%
Narcotics Safety	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	3 / 3	100.0%
High-alert Medications	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	8 / 8	100.0%
Client Identification	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	1 / 1	100.0%
Information Transfer at Care Transitions	Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport	5 / 5	100.0%
Workplace Violence Prevention	Leadership	8 / 8	100.0%
Patient Safety Education and Training	Leadership	1 / 1	100.0%
Medication Reconciliation as a Strategic Priority	Leadership	0 / 0	0.0%
Patient Safety Incident Disclosure	Leadership	6 / 6	100.0%

Table 1: Summary of the Organization's ROPs/RSPs

ROP/RSP Name	Standard(s)	# TFC Rating Met	% TFC Met
Patient Safety Incident Management	Leadership	7 / 7	100.0%
Client Flow	Leadership	5 / 5	100.0%
Preventive Maintenance Program	Leadership	4 / 4	100.0%

Assessment Results by Standard

The following section includes the outcomes from the attestation (if applicable) and on-site assessments, at the conclusion of the on-site assessment.

Core Standards

Qmentum Global™ for Canadian Accreditation has a set of core assessment standards that are foundational to the program and are required for the organization undergoing accreditation. The core assessment standards are critical given the foundational areas of high quality and safe care they cover.

The core standards are always part of the assessment, except in specific circumstances where they are not applicable.

Leadership

Standard Rating: 98.3% Met Criteria

1.7% of criteria were unmet. For further details please review the table at end of this section.

Assessment Results

Leadership

Guided by its four strategic pillars, Associated Ambulance has grown and evolved over the last four plus decades. It began as a grassroots EMS service and it is those roots that enabled the organization to grow to serve twenty-four communities, across three service contracts, while maintaining its care and compassion for the front-line staff.

The leadership team has expanded to include the Operational Managers at the senior leadership table. The leadership reports that they reinvest in the staff by providing the tools, resources and infrastructure they need. This reinvestment is apparent. In addition, the organization has invested in additional support staff positions that are not within the funding envelope of its service contracts.

The organization supports staff in their professional development and engages in a return-of-service agreement for staff that take positions in hard-to-recruit communities.

Secondary to recruitment needs, ASSAM has engaged with a media company to produce a promotional video and strengthen its web and social media presence. The website includes forms where staff, patients and the public can provide feedback, compliments and complaints about the service.

The organization is appreciated by its community partners, who report that staff give of their time in the community when able, but also recognize the increases in service demands and subsequent fatigue front-line staff experience. Management and supervisors are described as approachable and helpful when issues occur.

Since the last survey, there have been significant wildfires in Alberta, where ASSAM has played an instrumental role, either protecting the responders fighting the fires while community-wide evacuations occurred, or providing units and crews to evacuate facilities. In the 2024 Jasper wildfire, the leadership deployed generators and provided food baskets to ASSAM staff that remained in the community.

Because of the capacity, willingness and reputation of ASSAM, they are frequently called by Alberta Health Services to assist in patient transports, even when the request is outside of their contracted service area. The leadership mantra is “if we can help, we will.”

The organization has a sense of people-centred care within its culture. Despite this, the leadership is encouraged to incorporate perspectives of patients, clients and their families into their service in a more deliberate manner.

Table 2: Unmet Criteria for Leadership

Criteria Number	Criteria Text	Criteria Type
1.2.9	The organization regularly monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the ethics framework, and uses the results for improvement.	HIGH
3.4.13	The organization provides staff with opportunities to participate in performance reviews of the organizational leaders to give the leaders a more complete assessment of their performance.	NORMAL
4.1.4	The organization develops, implements, regularly reviews, and updates as needed a non-discrimination policy to reduce stigma and discrimination in the organization.	HIGH

Service Specific Assessment Standards

The Qmentum Global™ for Canadian Accreditation program has a set of service specific assessment standards that are included in the accreditation program based on the services delivered by different organizations. Service standards are critical to the management and delivery of high-quality and safe care in specific service areas.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport

Standard Rating: 99.5% Met Criteria

0.5% of criteria were unmet. For further details please review the table at end of this section.

Assessment Results

Associated Ambulance has made significant achievements in providing exceptional emergency medical services across Alberta. The organization has established itself as the largest contracted EMS provider in Alberta, with extensive geographical coverage and a high volume of events handled annually. The organization has actively engaged in community initiatives, such as the RISK program for youth, wildfire response efforts, and inter-agency training for mass casualty incidents, showcasing its commitment to public safety and collaboration.

Surveyors agree that the organization adheres to its core values of leadership, innovation, family principles, and excellence in care, which guide its operations and interactions with the community. Overall, Associated Ambulance's leadership and EMS staff are dedicated to improving health care services, supporting its employees, and fostering strong community relationships.

Associated Ambulance engages with the community through various initiatives and programs, including the Edmonton Interfacility Transfer Project. The organization has expanded services in the Edmonton metropolitan area with 12 Non-Emergency Transport (NET) and 11 Basic Life Support (BLS) units to support local EMS. During the Jasper wildfire response, the organization played a critical role in evacuating citizens and inpatients while maintaining service coverage and supporting recovery and rebuilding efforts in the community. The organization has participated in a RISK Program for grade 9 students. This one-day initiative raises awareness about trauma and substance-related injuries among youth in rural communities. The program includes a realistic motor vehicle collision scenario to educate students on safety and emergency response. The organization collaborated with the Hinton RCMP to plan and participate in a large-scale active shooter mock scenario, providing inter-agency training and strengthening emergency response preparedness. The organization also shares important safety tips on wildfire preparedness, lake safety, and ATV/quad safety to promote safe practices in the community.

Associated Ambulance has implemented measures to ensure employee safety. The organization conducts training for all staff to address and resolve workplace conflicts effectively. A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program has been implemented to promote inclusivity and psychological safety within the workplace. Additionally, a leadership framework has been developed across all organizational levels to foster consistent and supportive leadership. The organization has also set a goal to reduce musculoskeletal injury (MSI) and psychological claims by 20% over the duration of the strategic plan. The aim is to reduce Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) costs by 20%.

An infection prevention and control program has been developed and implemented. The Infection Prevention and Control Manual (Rev. 2025) is a detailed guide created by Associated Ambulance to establish best practices for minimizing the risks of communicable disease transmission in pre-hospital and inter-facility transport settings.

It serves as a resource for health care workers, particularly emergency and transport personnel, to ensure the safety of patients, staff, and the public while reducing health care costs and organizational liability.

The manual provides detailed procedures for effective hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rubs and soap and water, along with the “4 Moments of Hand Hygiene” to guide health care workers.

The organization has implemented innovative ways to monitor staff compliance with hand hygiene practices, recognizing the challenges of auditing in the EMS environment. While a new auditing process for hand hygiene compliance has been implemented, auditing rates are low and monitoring and sharing results with front-line staff has been challenging. Despite these challenges, ASSAM has taken creative steps to monitor compliance and plans to improve transparency by ensuring regular auditing is conducted and sharing audit results with staff to enhance adherence to hand hygiene practices. Surveyor observations identified that hand hygiene auditing rates are low across the organization, while some base stations have not reported any auditing for the recent quarter. The organization is encouraged to increase efforts to ensure hand hygiene audits are conducted at all base stations and results are reported.

There is evidence that organizational leaders ensure there is an organization-wide client flow strategy that aligns with the needs of the populations it serves. The organization uses a capacity impact strategy when EMS has a reduced ability to provide adequate community coverage and may impact meeting response time targets with available resources. There is ongoing surveillance and notification of responsible district supervisors for any over-target hospital intervals greater than 30 minutes with no status change. The district supervisors proactively engage site charge nurses/ED clinicians and support crews at facilities. District supervisors regularly attend hospital facilities where EMS crews are present and support return to service where delays in off-load are identified. EMS crews report significant improvement in patient off-load over the last two to three years since these initiatives were implemented.

The organization's ethical framework is designed to serve as a guiding principle for the organization and its employees to act in an honest, trustworthy, and ethical manner. It complements the organization's Code of Conduct and values and can be used to help staff navigate complex and challenging situations not explicitly addressed by company rules, policies, or procedures. The organization has developed an education plan to accompany the ethics framework, developed in July. Following the on-site survey visit, the organization is encouraged to schedule and deliver training for staff, in addition to the implementation date of the policy.

Table 3: Unmet Criteria for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Interfacility Transport

Criteria Number	Criteria Text	Criteria Type
2.2.8	Education and training are provided on the organization's ethical decision-making framework.	NORMAL