



San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency



<http://www.sjgov.org/ems>

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EMS Policy Memorandum No. 2020-31

DATE: June 24, 2020

TO: All Prehospital Personnel
All Acute Care Hospitals
Ambulance Service Providers

FROM: Katherine Shafer, M.D., EMS Medical Director
Dan Burch, EMS Administrator

SUBJ.: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Denial of Entry into Emergency Departments for
Transfer of Patient Care

The purpose of this policy memorandum is to provide direction to ambulance personnel if a hospital prohibits or denies entry into the emergency department for the transfer of patient care.

In the past two months the San Joaquin County EMS Agency (SJCEMSA) has received and confirmed multiple reports of ambulance personnel being denied entry into an emergency department when attempting to transfer patient care. SJCEMSA acknowledges that hospitals may enact temporary screening procedures or modified intake procedures for accepting emergency patients during the current public health emergency. Nonetheless, hospital personnel that deny ambulance personnel with an emergency patient entry into their facility or instruct ambulance personnel to return to or remain in the ambulance with a patient are refusing service to an emergency patient and placing that patient at risk.

If hospital personnel deny or unnecessarily delay an emergency patient's entry into the emergency department then ambulance personnel are directed to:

1. Transport the patient to the next closest acute care hospital or specialty care center (e.g. STEMI, stroke, trauma); and
2. Report the occurrence pursuant to EMS Policy No. 6101, Sentinel Event Reporting Requirements.

SJCEMSA shall evaluate each reported occurrence and notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Licensing and Certification as appropriate.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, contact Jeff Costa, RN, Critical Care Coordinator at (209) 468-6818 or the EMS Duty Officer after hours.