



# San Joaquin County

## Emergency Medical Services Agency



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

DATE: March 12, 2018

TO: Hospital Administrators  
Emergency Department Managers

FROM: Dan Burch, EMS Administrator

SUBJ.: Use of Internal Disaster to Divert Ambulances

Mailing Address  
PO Box 220  
French Camp, CA 95231

Health Care Services Complex  
Benton Hall  
500 W. Hospital Rd.  
French Camp, CA 95231

Phone Number  
(209) 468-6818

On January 1, 2016, the San Joaquin County EMS Agency (SJCEMSA) revised EMS Policy No. 4980 Receiving Hospital Diversion and EMS Policy No. 4981 Receiving Hospital Status to prohibit receiving hospitals from placing themselves on diversion or otherwise attempting to re-route ambulance traffic. On two occasions in the past 3 months receiving hospitals have declared internal disasters to circumvent the prohibition on diversion. Such actions are violations of SJCEMSA policy and violations of any designation agreement (e.g. trauma, STEMI, PSC, base hospital) between SJCEMSA and the offending receiving hospital.

Receiving hospitals that experience a high patient census should activate their patient surge plans and take the necessary steps to expand patient care areas and waive staffing ratios with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Licensing and Certification. SJCEMSA maintains a cache of portable hospital beds to support each hospital's patient surge plan. These portable beds may be accessed 24 hours a day by contacting the on call SJCEMSA duty officer.

SJCEMSA requests your assistance to ensure that your organization and employees abide by EMS Policy No. 4980 Receiving Hospital Diversion and EMS Policy No. 4981 Receiving Hospital Status.

Attachments:

EMS Policy No. 4980 Receiving Hospital Diversion  
EMS Policy No. 4981 Receiving Hospital Status

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit receiving hospitals from placing themselves on diversion or re-routing or attempting to re-route incoming ambulances to another receiving hospital.

**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220; & 1798 et seq

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. "Diversion" means the closure of a hospital's emergency department from receiving ambulance patients including all specialty services.
- B. "Receiving Hospital" means a licensed acute care hospital with an emergency permit that is approved by the EMS Agency to receive ambulance patients.

**POLICY:**

- I. Receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County are prohibited from placing themselves on diversion or re-routing or attempting to re-route incoming ambulances to another receiving hospital.
- II. Receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County shall on a daily basis utilize the EMSResource™ regional communication system and continually maintain the receiving hospital's current emergency department status in accordance with EMS Policy No. 4981 Receiving Hospital Status.
- III. Accountability:
  - A. EMS agency staff may perform unannounced site visits to receiving hospitals to ensure compliance with this policy.

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Effective: January 1, 2016  
Supersedes: January 1, 2010

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Approved: Signature on file  
Medical Director

Signature on file  
EMS Administrator

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for receiving hospitals to maintain and communicate emergency department status.

**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220; & 1798 et seq.

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. "Diversion" means the closure of a hospital's emergency department from receiving ambulance patients including all specialty services.
- B. "HAVBED" means the national Hospital Available Beds for Emergencies and Disasters system developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- C. "Receiving Hospital" means a licensed acute care hospital, with a comprehensive or basic emergency permit, that is approved by the San Joaquin County EMS Agency (SJCEMSA) to participate in the EMS system.
- D. "SJCEMSA Duty Officer" means an employee of the San Joaquin County EMS Agency designated to serve as the alternate San Joaquin County Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator, the alternate OES Region IV Regional Disaster Medical Health Coordinator, and empowered to act on behalf of the SJCEMSA.
- E. "WebEOC" means a secure online emergency management and information sharing platform for use by authorized agencies and organizations within the San Joaquin County Operational Area.

**POLICY:**

- I. All receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County shall on a daily basis utilize the EMSResource™ regional communication system and continually maintain the receiving hospital's current emergency department status using the following categories:
  - A. Open: Open to all patients.
  - B. Advisory: Full hospital services not available based on one or more of the following:
    - 1. Computerized Tomography (CT) unavailable;
    - 2. Contact Control Facility (CF) for major trauma patient destination;
    - 3. Main power outage using auxiliary power;
    - 4. STEMI services unavailable;
  - C. Diversion: Closed to ambulance traffic including all specialty services (not for use by San Joaquin County hospitals).
  - D. Internal Disaster: Closed to all patients based on one or more of the following:
    - 1. On Campus fire or explosion;

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Effective: January 1, 2016  
Supersedes: N/A

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2. On Campus security threat, i.e. assailant, active shooter, bomb threat;
3. Damaged infrastructure, i.e. building collapse or potential building collapse;
4. Hazardous material incident – sheltering in place;
5. Loss of main and auxiliary power;
6. Loss of water supply;
7. Other event requiring hospital evacuation;
8. Other event requiring sheltering in place.

II. Maintaining EMResource™:

- A. Receiving hospitals shall actively monitor EMResource™ in the emergency department with a visual display and audible alerting.
- B. Receiving hospitals shall update their facility status:
  1. Each morning at 0800 hours;
  2. When necessary to communicate changes in their status to the EMS system;
  3. When requested to provide a status update and report on availability during an active multi-casualty incident (MCI) or exercise;
  4. When requested to provide a status update and report on availability during an active HAvBED poll or exercise.

III. Diversion:

- A. Receiving hospitals in San Joaquin County are prohibited from placing themselves on diversion or re-routing or attempting to re-route incoming ambulances to another receiving hospital.

IV. Internal Disaster:

- A. Receiving hospitals that post a facility status of Internal Disaster are required to submit an updated Hospital Status Report in WebEOC and notify the SJCEMSA Duty Officer within 30 minutes.
- B. The SJCEMSA Duty Officer shall forward the Hospital Status Report for all internal disaster occurrences to the California Department of Health Services and the EMS Authority.

V. Accountability:

- A. SJCEMSA personnel may perform unannounced site visits to receiving hospitals to ensure compliance with this policy.
- B. The SJCEMSA Duty Officer may override a receiving hospital's status if the SJCEMSA Duty Officer determines that such a change is necessary to ensure the integrity and operation of the EMS system.

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Effective: January 1, 2016  
Supersedes: N/A

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Medical Director

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EMS Administrator