

**TITLE: EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE PROVIDER
DISPATCH REQUIREMENTS**

EMS Policy No. **3101**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish the minimum requirements for emergency ambulance dispatch in the San Joaquin County EMS System.

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220; San Joaquin County Ordinance No. 4231, Title 4, Division 7.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. "Ambulance Provider" means an entity properly permitted to operate an emergency advanced life support ambulance service in San Joaquin County.
- B. "Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency" means the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency.
- C. "Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)" means a series of components that allow the dispatcher to triage calls, send appropriate resources with the appropriate response, and provide pre-arrival instructions if needed.

POLICY:

- I. Ambulance Providers shall provide a system for EMS dispatch meeting the standards in ASTM F 1258 (Standard Practice for Emergency Medical Dispatch) and ASTM 1560 (Standard Practice for Emergency Medical Dispatch Management.)
- II. Ambulance Providers may operate their own dispatch center, contract with an existing dispatch center, or join with other providers to operate a dispatch system. If an Ambulance Provider utilizes dispatch services provided by another organization, it must have a written contract for that service. Contracts for essential services including dispatch must be pre-approved in writing by the EMS Agency.
- III. Dispatch Operations:
 - A. Ambulance Providers shall provide dispatch services necessary to receive and respond to requests for emergency and advanced life support (ALS) ambulance services and monitor system status. The Ambulance Provider's dispatch center shall:
 - 1. Be approved by the State of California as a public safety answering point (PSAP).
 - 2. Receive and process calls for emergency medical assistance from primary and secondary 9-1-1 PSAPs and seven digit telephone lines.

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3. Determine the nature and severity of medical incidents consistent with EMD protocols
 4. Prioritize the urgency of the EMS response.
 5. Dispatch appropriate EMS resources.
 6. Provide post-dispatch and pre-arrival instructions to callers.
 7. Notify responding personnel and agencies of pertinent information.
 8. Monitor and track responding resources.
 9. Coordinate with law enforcement, first response and other EMS providers as needed.
 10. Provide required data and reports to the EMS Agency.
- B. The Ambulance Provider's dispatch center shall be designated and continuously maintain accreditation as a center of excellence by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch.
- C. Ambulance Providers shall ensure that all dispatching and communication functions are conducted in a manner consistent with EMS Agency, Associated Public Safety Communication Officials, and National Academies of Emergency Dispatch policies, procedures, protocols, and standards.
- D. A computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system shall be utilized to record dispatch information for all ambulance requests. CAD system shall include the date, hours, minutes and seconds.
- E. The dispatch center shall have capabilities for 24-hour, "real time" recordings of all incoming emergency telephone lines and radio frequencies. All radio and telephone communications shall be recorded on tape or other digital recording medium and kept for a minimum of 90 days.
- F. Ambulance Providers shall use vehicle locator technologies allowing dispatchers to visually identify the location of the Ambulance Provider's ambulances in the San Joaquin County EMS system on a computer screen at all times, ensuring that the closest and most appropriate ambulance is dispatched to every call for emergency service.
- G. Ambulance Providers shall have a plan to provide emergency and advanced life support ambulance dispatch during any period of primary dispatch failure. The plan shall ensure that an equivalent dispatch center or dispatch system,

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approved by the EMS Agency, is able to serve as a backup dispatch center within five (5) minutes of failure of the primary dispatch center.

- H. Ambulance providers shall install and maintain a personal computer and CAD monitor at the EMS Agency, providing real-time viewing of deployed ambulance resources and the ability to perform real-time reports.

IV. Priority Dispatch System:

- A. Ambulance Providers shall utilize an EMD protocol reference system approved by the EMS Agency. The EMS protocol reference system shall include:
 1. Systemized caller interrogation questions.
 2. Systemized dispatch life support instructions.
 3. Systemized coding of protocols that allow the EMS Agency to match the dispatcher's evaluation of the injury or illness severity with the response.

V. Staffing:

- A. The dispatch center shall be staffed with sufficient emergency medical dispatchers to accomplish all dispatch and EMD functions.
- B. Each emergency medical dispatcher shall have completed an initial training program meeting the requirements of the California EMS Authority's Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Program Guidelines (EMSA #132, March 2003) and shall be nationally certified in emergency medical dispatch by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch.
- C. Each emergency medical dispatcher shall receive a minimum of 32 hours of continuing dispatch education (CDE) every year, meeting or exceeding the standards described by the California EMS Authority's Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Program Guidelines.

VI. Medical Direction and Continuous Quality Improvement:

- A. Ambulance Providers shall employ a medical director who shall be a board certified emergency physician in the State of California and who shall provide medical oversight of the emergency medical dispatch program. Contractor's medical director shall cooperate with the EMS Agency Medical Director who is responsible for medical control of the San Joaquin County EMS system.

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- B. Ambulance Providers shall establish a continuous quality improvement (CQI) program for its dispatch system meeting the standards described in the California EMS Authority's Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Program Guidelines. It shall address structural, resource, and/or protocol deficiencies as well as measure compliance to minimum protocol compliance standards as established by the EMD Medical Director through ongoing random case review for each emergency medical dispatcher.

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