

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to guide prehospital, base hospital, and disaster control facility personnel in determining the appropriate destination for trauma patients.

AUTHORITY:

Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.220, 1798 et seq. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 7.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. "Adult major trauma patient" means a patient 15 years of age or older that meets one or more of the major trauma triage criteria.
- B. "Pediatric major trauma patient" means a patient 14 years of age or younger that meets one or more of the major trauma triage criteria.
- C. "Unmanageable Airway" means a patient whose upper airway is compromised by an obstruction (e.g. mandibular fractures, tongue, hematoma, blood, or vomitus) preventing ventilation, or a patient being ventilated through a needle cricothyrotomy.

POLICY:

- I. Prehospital personnel shall assess all patients suffering acute injury or suspected acute injury using the trauma triage criteria established in EMS Policy No. 5210 Major Trauma Triage Criteria.
- II. San Joaquin County is divided into two (2) primary trauma center catchment areas:
 - A. Northern Catchment Area – All of San Joaquin County, except for the southern catchment area.
 - B. Southern Catchment Area – South of State Highway 120 in San Joaquin County Ambulance Zones E and F; and the area east of Escalon Bellota Road and south of Lone Tree Road.
- III. Adult Major Trauma Patient Destinations:
 - A. Northern catchment area – San Joaquin General Hospital (SJGH).
 - B. Southern catchment area – Doctors Medical Center or Memorial Medical

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- Center.
 - C. If the assigned trauma center is unavailable or at capacity, adult major trauma patients shall be transported to the next closest level II or III trauma center.
- IV. Pediatric Major Trauma Patients:
- A. Northern catchment area – U.C. Davis Medical Center (UCDMC).
 - B. Southern catchment area – UCDMC.
 - C. If the UCDMC is unavailable or at capacity, pediatric major trauma patients shall be transported to the closest level II or III trauma center.
 - D. The attending paramedic should consult with the SJGH base hospital physician on destination when:
 - 1. The ambulance is south of SJGH along Interstate 5 or Highway 99 traveling north to UCDMC; or
 - 2. In the paramedic’s judgement transport to a closer trauma center is warranted based on the patient’s condition.
- V. Multi-casualty Incidents (MCIs):
- A. Trauma patients triaged as “Immediate” shall be preferentially transported to designated trauma centers utilizing available trauma centers in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Sacramento counties.
 - B. When possible pediatric trauma patients triaged as “Immediate” shall be preferentially transported to the UCDMC.
 - C. During a trauma MCI, the Disaster Control Facility (DCF) shall include at a minimum all of the following trauma centers in their emergency department poll:
 - 1. San Joaquin General Hospital;
 - 2. Doctors Medical Center;
 - 3. Memorial Medical Center;
 - 4. UCDMC;
 - 5. Kaiser Hospital South Sacramento.
 - D. As specified in EMS Policy No. 5210, on secondary triage an “Immediate” patient includes patients meeting START criteria and patients meeting physiologic or anatomic major trauma triage criteria.
- VI. Specialty Considerations:
- A. Patients with an unmanageable airway should be transported to the closest receiving hospital.
 - B. Patients with partial or full thickness thermal, chemical or electrical burns greater than 9% total body surface should be transported to the level I trauma center at the UCDMC.

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- C. Patients with inhalation burns or with the potential for a compromised airway should be transported to the closest trauma center based on assigned trauma service area.
- VII. Trauma Center Bypass:
- A. When SJGH places itself on trauma center bypass due to the unavailability of a trauma surgeon, operating suite, or CT scanner:
 - 1. The DCF shall place an advisory notice on EMResource stating: “Contact control facility for major trauma patient destination”.
 - 2. The DCF may direct prehospital personnel to transport major trauma patients meeting physiologic or anatomic major trauma triage criteria to an unencumbered trauma center in Sacramento County or Stanislaus County, or may direct the patient to SJGH.
 - B. San Joaquin General Hospital should continue to accept major trauma patients meeting mechanism of injury and paramedic judgment criteria, when on trauma center bypass.
- VIII. Air ambulance transport considerations:
- A. Air ambulances shall not be used to transport trauma patients that do not meet major trauma triage criteria.
 - B. When ground ambulance transport is available on scene, air ambulance scene time shall be kept to an absolute minimum. If the transfer of care to air ambulance exceeds 10 minutes, ambulance personnel shall initiate ground transport without further delay.
 - C. Ground ambulance transport of a major trauma patient shall not be delayed for the arrival of an air ambulance.
- IX. Non-Emergent Trauma Patient Destination Considerations:
- A. In a non-emergent situation (patient does not meet major trauma triage criteria) the patient may be transported to the receiving hospital of their choice. If the patient is unable or unwilling to express a choice, defer to the wishes of the patient’s physician and/or family. In the absence of such direction, patients should be transported to the closest receiving hospital.
 - 1. Whenever possible prehospital personnel should determine where the patient normally receives their medical care and encourage the patient to return to that hospital.
 - 2. Prehospital personnel should only provide the patient and/or family with the available destination options. Prehospital personnel should not endorse a receiving hospital or otherwise provide their personal opinion on the quality or merits of any receiving hospital.
 - 3. If the patient is a member of a health plan with a preferred hospital

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an attempt should be made to transport the patient to a participating or preferred receiving hospital.

- B. Non-emergent trauma patients may choose to be transported to any receiving hospital in San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, or Sacramento County.
 - C. Ambulance personnel are not required to contact and should not contact the base hospital for permission to transport a non-emergent patient to a receiving hospital in San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, or Sacramento County
- X. Receiving Hospital Facility Status:
- A. Patients shall not be transported to a receiving hospital with a facility status of diversion.
 - B. Patients shall not be transported to a receiving hospital with a facility status of internal disaster/closed.