

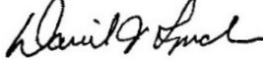


Central California Emergency Medical Services Agency

A Division of Fresno County
Department of Public Health

DATE: October 20, 2016

TO: All Fresno/Kings/Madera/Tulare EMS Providers, Hospitals, First Responder Agencies and Interested Parties

FROM: Daniel J. Lynch, EMS Director 

SUBJECT: Use of BLS Ambulances on Prehospital Calls

As you know, the health care system has been changing and ambulance providers are impacted by these changes. More people are using the ambulance to access non-urgent medical care at hospital emergency departments, and ambulance wait times to turnover a patient to hospital staff at many hospitals has become overwhelming. The EMS Agency has been working on several processes to alleviate these wait times in emergency department hallways.

When Special Memo #05-2016 was released on August 26, 2016, it reiterated current policy regarding transport to waiting rooms, and it also introduced several changes that could reduce the hospital wait times for ambulance providers. The Special Memo also notified ambulance providers that the EMS Agency was reviewing changes in the prehospital response system that included the use of basic life support (BLS) ambulances as the primary responder to specific priority 3 prehospital ambulance requests.

This letter is to update the ambulance providers on the progress of using BLS staffed ambulances for prehospital calls.

According to current EMS policy, a paramedic ambulance, if available, must respond to all priority 1, 2, and 3 responses. This will change. The EMS Agency will be modifying EMS policy to allow ambulance providers to use BLS staffed ambulances to be the primary ambulance response to EMS calls listed on Attachment A. It is the decision of each ambulance provider on whether they wish to use BLS ambulances. The intent of this change by the EMS Agency is to provide staffing options to the ambulance providers. Please note that the use of BLS ambulances does not relieve ambulance providers of response time performance standards.

After a very detailed review of over 370,000 incidents, the EMS Agency determined that several non-emergency incidents routinely involve individuals with very low acuity of illness/injury, rarely require advanced life support (ALS) intervention, and can be easily and safely handled by BLS personnel. It is the EMS Agency's intent to allow BLS ambulance response to these specific

non-emergency incidents in an effort to keep paramedic ambulances available for emergency responses but still provide appropriate level of care to individuals using the ambulance services.

Under a trial study with the EMS Agency, American Ambulance in Fresno has been preparing for the use of BLS ambulance to priority 3 incidents. On November 1, 2016, they will begin using BLS ambulances on only a couple of incident types as a stepping stone to including more priority 3 calls as BLS staff are trained and prepared for response to prehospital incidents. BLS ambulances will first begin responding to incidents involving psychiatric patients placed on a 5150 hold by law enforcement at the time of dispatch and as a second transport ambulance (at the request of an on-scene paramedic ambulance) to medical incidents that only require a BLS transport to the hospital.

American's training of its EMTs includes re-education in policies and procedures, including RMCT, patient destination, BLS protocols, criteria for base hospital contact and ALS rendezvous. The training also includes PCR documentation procedures and the use of the med-radio for contacting hospitals. For only a temporary period of time, the EMS Agency has allowed American Ambulance EMTs to ride in the patient compartment on these types of non-emergent calls while the paramedic drives the ambulance to the hospital in order to provide the EMT with experience in the presence of a mentoring paramedic. This is only for a fixed period of time and current policy requires that a paramedic must always be in the patient compartment with the patient if assigned to the ambulance.

The EMS Agency wants to expand the use of BLS ambulances throughout the four-county EMS region. Many of the ambulance providers have already used a BLS ambulance when its paramedic units are unavailable; however, this is a change in EMS policy and will allow the routine use of BLS ambulances on many different types of prehospital calls. As ambulance providers consider and prepare to integrate BLS ambulances into the prehospital system, we request that you contact the EMS Agency prior to implementation.

If your agency is interested in using BLS ambulances as a primary ambulance response to the types of incidents listed on Attachment A, please contact Dale Dotson, EMS Operations Coordinator, at (559) 600-3387.

DJL:rb

Attachment

ATTACHMENT A
APPROVED BLS RESPONSE LISTING

Category	PPC	Problem	Response Priority
Abdominal Pain	01-Default	Default	3
Abdominal Pain	01A01	Abdominal Pain	3
Abdominal Pain	01C01	Suspected Aortic Aneurysm	3
Abdominal Pain	01C02	Known Aortic Aneurysm	3
Abdominal Pain	01C03	Fainting/Near Fainting >50	3
Abdominal Pain	01C04	Females with Fainting or Near 12-50	3
Abdominal Pain	01C05	Males with pain above navel >35	3
Abdominal Pain	01C06	Females with pain above navel >45	3
Allergies	02A01	No difficulty breathing or swallowing	3
Allergies	02A02	Spider bite	3
Animal Bite / Attack	03-Default	Default	3
Animal Bite / Attack	03A01	Not Dangerous Body Area	3
Animal Bite / Attack	03A02	Non-recent >6 hrs	3
Animal Bite / Attack	03A03	Superficial Bites	3
Assault / Sexual Assault	04A01	Not Dangerous Body Area	3
Assault / Sexual Assault	04A02	Non-Recent (>6hrs) without priority symptoms	3
Assault / Sexual Assault	04B01	Possibly Dangerous	3
Assault / Sexual Assault	04B02	Serious Hemorrhage	3
Back Pain	05A01	Non-Traumatic	3
Back Pain	05A02	Non-Recent (>6hrs) Traumatic	3
Burns / Explosion	07A03	Sunburn or minor burn	3
Diabetic Problems	13A01	Alert and Behaving Normally	3
Eye Problems / Injuries	16A02	Minor Eye Injuries	3
Falls	17A01	Not Dangerous Body Area	3
Falls	17A02	Non-Recent (>6hrs) No Priority Symptoms	3
Falls	17A03	Public Assist - No Injuries	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20-Default	Default	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20A01	Alert	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20B01	Change in Skin Color	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20B02	Unknown Status	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20C01	Heart Attack or Angina History	3
Heat / Cold Exposure	20D02	Multiple Victims	3
Hemorrhage / Lacerations	21A01	Not Dangerous Hemorrhage	3
Hemorrhage / Lacerations	21A02	Minor Hemorrhage	3
Hemorrhage / Lacerations	21B01	Possibly Dangerous	3
Hemorrhage / Lacerations	21B02	Serious Hemorrhage	3
Overdose / Poisoning	23O01	Poisoning (without priority symptoms)	3

Category	PPC	Problem	Response Priority
Pregnancy / Childbirth / Miscarriage	24O01	Waters Broken (no contraction or presentation)	3
*Psychiatric Intervention			3
*Psychiatric Problem		*Psychiatric Problem	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25A01	Non-Suicidal and Alert	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25A02	Suicidal (not threatening) and Alert	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25B01	Serious Hemorrhage	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25B02	Non-Serious or Minor Hemorrhage	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25B03	Threatening Suicide	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25B05	Near Hanging, strangulation, suffocation (alert)	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25D01	Not Alert	3
Psych/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide	25D02	Dangerous Hemorrhage	3
Sick Person	26O01	OMEGA Response - No Complaint	3
Sick Person	26O02	OMEGA Response - Non-Priority Complaint	3
Sick Person	26A01	No Priority Symptoms	3
Sick Person	26A02	No Priority Complaint (all responses in this category)	3
Sick Person	26B01	Unknown Problem	3
Stab / Gunshot / Penetrating Trauma	27A01	Non-Recent (>6 hours) or Peripheral	3
Traffic / Transportation Incidents	29O01	No Injuries reported	3
Traffic / Transportation Incidents	29A01	Not Dangerous Body Area	3
Traumatic Injury	30A01	Not Dangerous Body Area	3
Traumatic Injury	30A02	Non-Recent (>6hrs)	3
Unknown Problem	32B01	Standing, Sitting, Moving, or Talking	3
Unknown Problem	32B02	Medical Alarm	3
Unknown Problem	32B03	Unknown Status	3
Unknown Problem	32B04	Language Barrier	3