

**CENTRAL CALIFORNIA**  
**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
A Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Health

Manual	Emergency Medical Services Administrative Policies and Procedures	Policy Number 560
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References		Effective 10/01/86

**I. POLICY**

Routine blood pressure checks may be done by EMS personnel under controlled circumstances and utilizing adequate record keeping. If the patient is asymptomatic and the blood pressure is not extraordinarily high, he may be told his blood pressure and advised to see a physician, if appropriate. If the patient has associated symptoms of hypertension or has extraordinarily high blood pressure, he needs to be fully assessed and treated like any other patient.

**II. PURPOSE**

This policy allows for a needed community service for high blood pressure screening while still maintaining the medical control for the Scope of Practice for EMTs or Paramedics.

**III. PROCEDURE**

**1. Patients requesting blood pressure testing by EMS personnel**

- A. Every patient presenting for a blood pressure check shall have the following information entered into a blood pressure log book. Included will be the date, time, patient's name, presenting complaint, blood pressure, pulse, position the blood pressure was taken in, and advice given to the patient. This log book, or a copy of it, will be maintained by the provider agency and available for review by the EMS Agency.

**B. Patients with Symptoms**

Patients with a specific or general chief complaint should be asked specifically about headaches, chest pain or shortness of breath. Patients with complaints of chest pain, shortness of breath or other potentially life-threatening conditions shall be assessed completely and receive the appropriate prehospital actions including written documentation and Base Hospital contact. This shall be done irregardless of blood pressure reading if the patient presents with a potential life-threatening complaint.

**C. Patients without Symptoms**

On patients who have no symptoms, action will be taken based upon the following classifications.

Approved By EMS Division Manager	Signatures on File at EMS Agency	Revision
EMS Medical Director	Signatures on File at EMS Agency	04/19/2005

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Systolic Blood Pressure		Diastolic Blood Pressure	
Dangerous	220	Dangerous	150
	210		140
	200		130
	190		120
High	180	High	110
	170		100
	160	Borderline	90
	150		80
Borderline	140	Normal	70
	130		60
	120		50
Normal	110		

D. Dangerous Level

If the systolic blood pressure is greater than 210 or the diastolic blood pressure is greater than 130, the patient requires a complete assessment and physician contact, even though he is asymptomatic. Blood pressures should be checked in both arms.

1. Attempt to contact the patient's regular physician by telephone. Tell that physician the blood pressure and then let the physician speak directly to the patient with his medical advice.

NOTE: An EMT or Paramedic may not take advanced life support orders from a private physician.

2. If the private physician wishes the patient transported or if unable to contact the private physician, call a Base Hospital as usual and report the findings as well as, if applicable, the physician's advice.

E. High Level

If the blood pressure is elevated but the patient has no symptoms and the blood pressure is not in the dangerous range (see above), you should tell the patient what their blood pressure is. Tell them that it is elevated and that they should see a physician within a week to have it checked. If they have a regular physician, they should call that physician and report what their blood pressure is.

F. Borderline Level

If the blood pressure is elevated (borderline range) but the patient has no symptoms, you should tell the patient what their blood pressure is. Tell them that their blood pressure is a little higher than normal. Suggest that they have their blood pressure rechecked within the next month. Should the pressure remain elevated, they should see a physician in order to have their blood pressure evaluated.

G Normal Range

If the blood pressure is within the normal range, you may tell them that their blood pressure is normal and to see their regular doctor as needed.