

3.00 DEFINITIONS

- 3.01 **Acute**: Having a rapid and recent onset and a short course.
- 3.02 **Acute emergency medical problem**: An injury or symptom of a medical problem (pain, difficulty breathing, rash, etc.), which is recent or has never been evaluated/treated by a medical professional.
- 3.03 **Adolescent**: Patient aged 8 up to 16 years of age.
- 3.04 **Adult**: Patient age 16 or older. For medical consent/legal issues, patient must be 18 unless emancipated.
- 3.05 **Advanced Life Support (ALS) Unit**: A medic or squad unit staffed with at least one credentialed paramedic and one credentialed EMT which provides advanced levels of patient care such as invasive techniques in addition to the basic measures provided by BLS personnel. For the purposes of these guidelines, ALS unit shall also refer to EMS Supervisors or EMS Physicians.
- 3.06 **Appropriate Facility**: A hospital facility with staffing, equipment and services to care for the patient (e.g. pediatric patients with severe respiratory distress should be transported to a facility with a pediatric department and pediatric intensive care unit).
- 3.07 **Base Station**: The Paramedic staffed office which coordinates on-line medical direction and emergency ambulance routing between field EMT's, Paramedics and physicians. This office is staffed 24 hours a day and can relay current hospital requests for ambulance diversion status.
- 3.08 **Base Station Physician**: Physician designated by the HFD Physician Director to be responsible for directing patient care in individual cases.
- 3.09 **Baseline Assessment**: Scene safety, rapid assessment of emergency scene and determination of need for more resources, Airway (with C-Spine protection, if indicated), Breathing, Circulation, and Disability (Neurological Status), identification of chief complaint and initial vital signs.
- 3.10 **Basic Life Support (BLS) Unit**: An apparatus capable of providing patient transport and basic life support such as airway, oxygen, CPR, bandaging, spinal precautions, etc. in which the staffing standard, in all cases possible, will be two credentialed EMT's. For BLS Ambulances, Texas State EMS Rules require two credentialed EMT's as staffing.
- 3.11 **Capacity to Refuse Care**: A patient (at least 18 years of age) who is capable of making an informed decision will be considered to have capacity to refuse care only if they demonstrate they are oriented to person, place and time; AND can recite back the nature of their medical condition, the risks and benefits of the proposed care/transportation AND the risks of refusing the proposed care/transportation AND is making a reasoned health care decision.
- 3.12 **Child**: Patient 1 year of age up to age 8 years.
- 3.13 **Chronic medical problem**: A medical condition of any duration, for which the patient is receiving care from a medical professional or is appropriately self-treating.

- 3.14 **Controlled Substance**: a DEA scheduled medication which has been declared by federal or state law to be used or distributed only under a physician’s order. The basis for control and regulation is the danger of addiction, abuse, physical and mental harm (including death), the trafficking by illegal means, and the dangers from actions of those who have used the substances. Controlled substances are subject to daily accountability regulations.
- 3.15 **Credentialed**: A Houston Firefighter certified or licensed by the State of Texas as an EMT or EMT-Paramedic who is also specifically authorized by the City of Houston EMS Physician Director to provide their respective level of care in accordance with the delegated practice of medicine authority of the Texas Medical Practice Act and these guidelines.
- 3.16 **Emancipated Minor**: A legal term for a person age 16 through 17 who is married, a member of the armed services, or living apart from their parents and who is entitled to make their own medical care decisions.
- 3.17 **EMS Apparatus**: An apparatus, not utilized for patient transport, in which the staffing standard, in all cases possible, will be two credentialed EMT’s (e.g. engine, ladder). An EMS apparatus is considered a Basic Life Support unit even if staffed with a credentialed paramedic.
- 3.18 **EMS Apparatus Paramedic**: A credentialed paramedic assigned to an EMS Apparatus company as part of the paramedic rotation program or the paramedic officer program. An EMS Apparatus paramedic shall function as a credentialed paramedic within the limits of the equipment available.
- 3.19 **EMS Witnessed Arrest**: A patient who goes into cardiac arrest while in the presence of HFD personnel.
- 3.20 **Hospital Administration**: Senior hospital administrative personnel, not assigned to patient care duties in the emergency department, who are responsible for hospital operations at the time of the diversion request.
- 3.21 **Infant**: Age one hour up to one year.
- 3.22 **Level I/II Trauma Center**: Comprehensive trauma facility capable of providing the most advanced level of care to the victim of major trauma.
- 3.23 **Level III Trauma Center**: General trauma facility that has the resources and capabilities to provide resuscitation, stabilization, and assessment of trauma patients and can either provide treatment or arrange for appropriate transfer to a Level I/II trauma facility.
- 3.24 **Medical Decision Making Capacity**: A state of being in which a person is oriented to person, place, time, circumstance and is able to demonstrate/verbalize an understanding of their medical problem, and potential consequences of refusing or receiving treatment.
- 3.25 **Minor**: A legal term. A person less than 18 years of age, unless emancipated.
- 3.26 **Neonate**: “Newly born”, up to one hour of age.
- 3.27 **OEC**: Office of Emergency Communications.

- 3.28 **Patient:** Any person who 1) requests a medical evaluation, or 2) is concerned they have an acute emergency medical problem or an exacerbation of a chronic medical problem, or 3) is an individual whom a competent EMT would identify as having a medical problem in need of evaluation or treatment.
- 3.29 **Patient Care Guidelines:** Guidelines for practices that are used by EMS personnel in a variety of situations within the EMS system.
- 3.30 **Patient Care Record:** The electronic or paper means used to document all information relating to a patient encounter. This includes demographic information, patient complaint information, treatment and therapy information, patient refusals and any other information relevant to the particular patient encounter.
- 3.31 **Pediatric:** Encompasses patients less than 16 years of age or less than 40 kg/88 lbs. Subcategories of 'pediatric' include neonate, infant, child and adolescent.
- 3.32 **Persistent Ventricular Fibrillation/Tachycardia:** Cases of VF/VT that do not resolve with therapy or are characterized by persistent refrillation (each refrillation occurs within two to three minutes after the last conversion).
- 3.33 **Return of Spontaneous Circulation (ROSC):** A return of a palpable pulse (including a transient return) at any point during the resuscitative efforts.
- 3.34 **Restraints:** Any mechanism used to physically confine a patient including soft composite dressing, tape, leathers or hand cuffs which are wrapped and secured at the wrist(s) and/or ankle(s) and/or chest and/or lower extremities.
- 3.35 **Resuscitation:** Any effort, including basic and advanced life support procedures, used to restore cardiopulmonary functions.
- 3.36 **Standing Orders:** Strictly defined written orders for actions, techniques, or drug administration that may be implemented before communication has been established with the physician providing on-line medical direction.
- 3.37 **Unwitnessed Arrest:** A patient who was found without a pulse or breathing, and whose collapse was neither seen nor heard.
- 3.38 **Witnessed Arrest:** A patient who was seen or heard by bystanders (non-HFD personnel) to collapse or become unconscious and was found to be without a pulse or breathing.