



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Emergency Medical Services Agency

POLICY # 451.00

TITLE: **EMERGENCY AMBULANCE DISPATCH**

APPROVED: ON-FILE

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ON-FILE

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Authority: California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220

Purpose: To establish the mechanism by which ambulances shall be dispatched to emergency medical requests for service within the jurisdiction of the Merced County EMS Agency, as well as establish the means for upgrading the ambulance response priority or the cancelation of an ambulance responding to a medical emergency.

Definitions: **Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD)** – is defined as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher, who is specially trained in interrogation techniques, Pre-Arrival Instructions, and call prioritization using the MPDS Protocols and certified by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch.

Priority Dispatch – is defined as an Ambulance response determined by the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) Protocols, which is done, by completion of Case Entry and Key Questions. Callers will receive Pre-Arrival Instruction via the EMD until the emergency medical response team, arrives on-scene.

Priority One – Shall mean lights and siren immediate response for a presumed life-threatening condition. This prompts the response of the closest advanced life support ambulance unit and the closest non-transport first responder unit in order to provide the most rapid response of personnel who can provide immediate basic life support in the form of airway management, CPR, bleeding control, and, if available, defibrillation.

Priority Two – Shall mean lights and siren immediate response for a presumed life-threatening condition. This priority prompts the immediate response of the closest advanced life support ambulance unit. In an urban setting with rapid ambulance response times, the response of a non-transport first responder unit may not be necessary as the need for immediate basic life support intervention is limited. However, in rural, remote, or wilderness areas where the ambulance response is prolonged,

the response of a non-transport first responder unit is appropriate to provide supportive basic life support until the arrival of the ambulance.

Priority Three – Shall mean non-lights and siren urgent response for a presumed non-life-threatening, but urgent condition. This priority prompts the immediate response of the closest advanced life support or basic life support ambulance unit (if available) for reasons other than an immediate threat to life or limb. The EMS Agency has identified and approved specific priority 3 incidents that allow a basic life support (BLS) ambulance to be the primary ambulance response.

PSAP – is defined as the Public Service Answering Point.

First Responder Agency – Shall be limited to duly recognized authorized Public Safety Agencies operating within Merced County or any incorporated political subdivision thereof.

Policy: Establishment of the Dispatch Priority

- A. The priority for the dispatch shall be determined by use of the MPDS Protocols.

Downgrading the Dispatch Priority

- A. BLS providers (fire, law or ambulance) who arrive on-scene prior to the arrival of an ALS ambulance, or field supervisor unit, may downgrade ALS Provider response from Code-3 to Code-2 if no clear emergency medical condition exists (e.g., no shortness of breath, chest pain, altered mental status, acute abdominal pain).

Upgrading the Dispatch Priority

- A. Up-grading of an ambulance dispatch priority shall occur when the EMD is provided new or updated information.
 - 1. An update from an authorized PSAP that reflects new and updated information that indicates a more appropriate/higher level response as per IAED Standards.

Canceling the Responding Ambulance

- A. Ambulances responding for emergency requests for service may only be cancelled as provided for below:
1. A call-back from an authorized PSAP advising that their on-scene unit has confirmed that there is no medical need for the ambulance, or that they are unable to locate a patient. If the cancellation is due to no medical need, the EMD Dispatch Center shall confirm the agency canceling the ambulance.
 2. An update from a recognized first response agency advising that there is no need for the ambulance, or that they are unable to locate a patient. If the cancellation is due to no medical need, the EMD Dispatch Center shall confirm the first responder agency canceling the ambulance.
 3. At no time will an Ambulance cancellation be initiated by the EMD unless;
 - a) The EMD speaks directly to the adult patient or legal guardian of a minor or incapacitated adult whose desire is to cancel the responding ambulance.
 - b) The EMD must determine the patient is conscious, breathing and alert and shows no distress or possible life-threatening symptoms and confirms their desire to cancel the ambulance response.
 - c) All ambulance responses that are cancelled while enroute will be documented in the CAD by the EMD notating for cancellation, confirmation the patient is conscious, breathing and alert, who initiated the cancellation.

Dispatching and Cancellation of Additional Resources

- A. Additional resources shall be dispatched to EMS incidents as follows:
1. Whenever the Ambulance Provider responsible for an EMS area where an emergency request for service occurs is unable to immediately affect an ambulance response, with a shorter ETA than the closest mutual aid ambulance.

2. Whenever the Ambulance Provider responsible for the EMS area where an MCI occurs has insufficient units to manage the number of patients.
 3. All mutual aid request will follow approved Merced County EMS Agency agreements.
- B. Should the ambulance provider responsible for the area in which the mutual aid ambulance is responding subsequently be in a position to respond a properly equipped and staffed ambulance which has made radio contact with the dispatch center and advised of their available status, the EMD shall only cancel the mutual aid ambulance upon confirmation of a shorter ETA for the responsible ambulance provider's unit.
1. Additional Resources may only be cancelled as provided for below:
 - a) As requested by an authorized PSAP.
 - b) As requested by a recognized first response or law enforcement agency with personnel on-scene who are confirming that there is no need for additional ambulances, or as requested by an on-scene ambulance crew.