



Department of Public Health  
Emergency Medical Services Agency

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This policy supersedes any other existing policy on this subject.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Subject: **CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORTION AMBULANCE AUTHORIZATION**

Authority: Merced County Code, Sections 9.44 et. seq., Health and Safety Code Section 1797.220

Definitions: **Agency** - means the Merced County Emergency Medical Services Agency within the Department of Public Health.

**CCTA** – means a Critical Care Transportation Ambulance, which, for the purpose of this policy, shall be an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance, staffed and equipped with additional personnel and the equipment necessary to meet the mission statement and scope of medical services provided by such a service.

**Promptly Available** – means a fully staffed and equipped CCTA capable of responding to requests for service within 30 minutes of the time of request.

**Interfacility Transfer** - shall mean the transfer of a patient from a hospital emergency department or hospital inpatient area, hereafter referred to as "facility", to any acute care facility.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy shall be to establish the standards for operation, program approval and licensure of CCTA programs, based or operating within Merced County.

Policy: General Provisions

1. All CCTA programs based or operating within Merced County shall be licensed by the Agency prior to initiating CCTA services originating from within Merced County, and said operations shall be restricted as contained herein. Program applications submitted for approval shall meet the minimum standards as established by Merced County Code, Section 9.44 et. seq. and this policy. CCTA providers shall not be approved for service until such time as a formal contract for service has been executed with the County of Merced.
2. CCTA operations, as delineated in Merced County Code, Section 9.44 et. seq., are ALS ambulances and shall be subject to the same operational restrictions as an ALS ambulance operation, relative to the application of Merced County ambulance exclusivity authority.

APPROVED:

ON-FILE

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3. The CCTA provider shall develop a written mission statement which defines the scope of care to be provided by the service. This statement shall also include the criteria establishing which patients are eligible for CCTA transfers.
4. All patient care resources, including personnel and equipment, necessary to the programs' mission must be available in the transport vehicle. This includes all ALS medications and equipment currently required by the County along with those additional medications and equipment as required to fulfill the mission statement and treatment protocols of the CCTA provider.
5. There shall be an educational program and/or printed information made available to the medical professional community regarding services offered through CCT transport as well as the specific patient criteria.
6. CCTA providers shall develop and maintain treatment protocols, separate and distinct from the Agency's treatment protocols, which are consistent with the provider's mission statement and scope of services.
7. CCTA providers, licensed to operate within Merced County, shall be promptly available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to respond to requests for service.

#### CCTA Program Medical Director

1. All CCTA providers shall have a formal relationship with a CCTA Program Medical Director, either as an employee of the provider or under a contractual arrangement.
2. The Medical Director(s) shall be licensed and authorized to practice medicine in California. He or she must have board certification or substantial experience in those areas of medicine that are commensurate with the mission statement of the CCTA service. The CCTA Provider may contract with specialty physicians for consultation and training purposes, if no Medical Director with the above qualifications is available.
  - A. The provider shall submit a copy of these contracts to the LEMSA upon application for CCTA program approval.
3. The CCTA provider shall maintain a record of the Medical Director's educational experience and/or board certifications. The CCTA provider shall, if applicable, maintain records of the educational experience and/or board certifications of the specialty physician consultants and make same available for review by the Agency.
4. The Medical Director shall be responsible for the following program areas:
  - A. development and implementation of the program mission statement and patient treatment protocols;
  - B. personnel training program approval;
  - C. quality improvement / medical oversight for the CCTA program and all medical personnel associated with the program;

- D. approval of all CCTA provider policies involving patient care, equipment and medications and patient communications;

#### CCTA Personnel Standards

1. Minimum CCTA personnel configuration shall be as follows:
  - A. one (1) physician or registered nurse with a minimum of one (1) year of experience in a critical care or emergency department setting; and
  - B. one (1) paramedic with a minimum of; 1) three years of field experience; or 2) certification as a critical care transport paramedic or equivalent and one year of field experience; and
  - C. one EMT-1 driver
2. The CCT provider, with their Medical Director, shall develop and implement a comprehensive personnel training program. This program will address initial training as well as regular competency evaluation and continuing education. The CQI committee findings shall drive the training program.
3. All personnel working the CCTA shall be regularly assigned to the unit.

#### Quality Improvement

1. The CCTA provider shall establish and maintain an individual in the position of Clinical Care Supervisor. The provider will establish the minimum education and clinical experience of the Clinical Care Supervisor, along with a detailed job description. This individual shall be responsible for coordinating the quality improvement program for the provider.
2. The CCTA provider shall establish a formal continuous quality improvement (CQI) policy and committee. This policy shall clearly specify the following, at a minimum:
  - A. list of quality indicators to be used
  - B. make-up of the CQI committee
  - C. frequency of meetings
  - D. methods used to obtain loop closure
  - E. a description of the process for implementing corrective action, to include both operational and personnel issues
  - F. confidentiality issues

#### Field Operations

1. CCTA operations shall be restricted to interfacility transfers with the following exceptions:

- A. When functioning in the capacity of a backup ALS unit. CCTAs may not operate as a scheduled 911 response unit.
  - 1) The paramedic on the CCTA shall function as the primary caregiver when responding to 911 calls. The CCTA nurse may function only as an extra set of ALS hands, and may assist with those ALS procedures and medications as delineated within the Merced County EMS Agency ALS Treatment Protocols, and for which they have received training. At no time shall a CCTA nurse be the sole ALS provider on a CCTA.
- B. When responding to a physician's office or other clinical setting outside an acute care hospital to perform a pre-arranged transfer. CCTAs may only respond for such transfers following physician to physician communications confirming that a physician at the receiving hospital has agreed to accept the patient.

Procedure:

1. Applicants for CCTA licensure shall complete the following process for consideration of licensure in Merced County:
  - A. submit an application for CCTA provider supplied by the Agency
  - B. submit all supporting documentation as required in the application
  - C. pay the established fee
2. Within 10 working days of receipt of the application, the Agency shall send a letter to the applicant stating that either the application is complete and in process, or outlining what elements of the application are missing and a request for their submission.
3. Within 30 days of receipt of a complete application, the Agency shall send a letter to the applicant both confirming or denying licensure, and any conditions that may apply. If denied, the letter shall include the criteria for the denial.
4. If the application for licensure is denied, the applicant may request reconsideration by the Director of Public Health.
  - A. A hearing with the Ambulance Review Board (ARB) shall be scheduled within 21 days of receipt of a request for reconsideration. The applicant shall be afforded the opportunity to bring representation and state their arguments and present evidence to the ARB for their consideration. The Agency shall present their findings and criteria for denial.
  - B. Within five (5) working days of the hearing, the ARB shall submit its recommendation to both the Director of Public Health and the applicant. The Director of Public Health shall make his/her decision regarding the reconsideration and send a certified letter to the applicant within ten (10) working days of receipt of the recommendation of the ARB. The Director of Public Health's decision shall be final.