



Emergency Medical Dispatch Provider Agency

PURPOSE

- I. To identify the minimum requirements for an agency to be approved as an Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) provider.

POLICY

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. Only those agencies operating with a written agreement with the Napa County EMS Agency may operate as an emergency medical dispatch provider.
- B. No provider agency, public safety answering point (PSAP) or other agency answering requests for emergency medical response shall engage in emergency medical dispatching unless that agency has a written agreement with the Napa County EMS Agency acknowledging the requirement to operate within the framework of the guidelines issued by the California State EMS Authority and the Napa County EMS Agency.
- C. EMD service providers shall provide this service twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week except under certain circumstances such as infrequent dispatcher work overload or under disaster conditions as specified by the State of California Government Code, California Emergency Services Act, Chapter 7, Division 1, Title 2, Section 8558.
- D. EMD centers agree to abide by the policies, regulations and standards approved and mandated by State and Federal agencies, and the Napa County EMS Agency.

II. EMD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. All EMD providers operating within Napa shall ensure that their dispatchers have successfully completed an approved EMD Training Program certified by California State Fire Marshal (CSFM), Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST), Napa County EMS Agency or Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA).
- B. The EMD Agency shall be staffed with a minimum of two (2) certified personnel in the immediate dispatch area.
- C. EMD centers shall appoint a representative to participate in any related provider dispatch committee(s) and advice on future changes in EMD policy.
- D. Establish a record-keeping system, including report forms or a computer data management system to permit evaluation of patient care records to ensure emergency medical dispatcher compliance with the Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference System (EMDPRS) and timeliness of interview questions and dispatch.

III. EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH PROTOCOL REFERENCE SYSTEM (EMDPRS)

- A. An EMD Program shall include an EMDPRS selected by the EMD Provider Agency and approved by the EMD Medical Director as its foundation.
- B. The EMDPRS is a medically approved protocol based system used by emergency medical dispatchers to interrogate callers, dispatch aid and provide dispatch life support instructions during medical emergencies.

IV. DISPATCH PERSONNEL – DISPATCHERS/LEAD DISPATCHERS

- A. The EMD Provider Agency shall establish policies and procedures through its continuous quality improvement program, consistent with the EMD scope of practice that includes but is not limited to:
1. Receiving and processing calls for emergency medical assistance.
 2. Ensuring the EMD call answering point maintains direct access to the calling party.
 3. Providing systematized caller interview questions.
 4. Providing systematized post-dispatch and pre-arrival instructions.
 5. Determining the nature and severity of medical incidents.
 6. Prioritizing the urgency of the response.
 7. Dispatching appropriate EMS resources.
 8. Coordinating with public safety and EMS providers as needed.
- B. Reference the Napa County EMS Agency [Administrative Policy 205, Emergency Medical Dispatcher](#) for specific requirements relating to the initial certification and recertification of EMD's.

V. EMD CENTER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) COORDINATOR

- A. A Physician, Registered Nurse, Paramedic, EMD Instructor or Communications Manager Supervisor shall be appointed as the QI Coordinator by the EMD Center and approved by the EMS Agency.
- B. All EMD providers operating within Napa County shall employ an EMD QI Coordinator, who shall be a person qualified by education AND experience in the EMD and CQI process. Nothing in this section prohibits the same individual from being responsible for more than one function if so qualified.
- C. Duties of the QI Coordinator shall include but not be limited to:
1. Administering the dispatch program;
 2. Coordinating all clinical and field activities related to the program;
 3. Ensuring that all EMD's employed by the provider meet all continuing education and update requirements as needed to maintain continuous certification by the provider agency;
 4. Assuring that all aspects of the training program are in compliance with state and county laws and policies;
 5. Be the authorized point of contact for all matters relating to the EMD program;
 6. Review the EMD program at least annually, retaining records to that effect for a period of seven (7) years.

VI. MEDICAL DIRECTION AND OVERSIGHT

- A. The EMD Provider Agency shall employ, contract, or designate the services of a physician Medical Director (which may include a Local EMS Agency Medical Director), who shall:
1. Be licensed as a physician in California; board certified or qualified in Emergency Medicine.
 2. Possess knowledge of EMS systems in California and of the local jurisdiction; and be familiar with dispatching systems and methodologies.

3. The EMD Medical Director shall be responsible for ensuring that the Agency's EMD Program is established in accordance with state and local guidelines and policies.
 4. Approval of the EMD training program and participating in ongoing evaluation and review of those programs.
 5. Evaluation of the medical care, post-dispatch and pre-arrival instructions rendered by EMD personnel.
 6. Review of all continuous quality improvement, training and risk management functions in the Agency's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan, including the establishment and monitoring of programs designed to correct identified medical quality issues.
- B. The EMD Medical Director shall provide medical oversight for all medical aspects of the EMD program including but not limited to:
1. The EMDPRS.
 2. The EMD Training Program.
 3. Continuing Dispatch Education program.
 4. Compliance Standards.
 5. Policies and procedures.
 6. CQI program.
 7. Risk management functions.
 8. Records management.

VII. DISPATCH PROCEDURES

- A. Designated Dispatch Centers shall have the responsibility to insure that the EMD is appropriately handling calls.
- B. All calls handled by an EMD will be recorded and maintained on tape for a minimum of 180 days, as required by California State Government Code, Section 34090.6.
- C. Dispatch times will be recorded on all calls and maintained in the EMS-CAD database or dispatch log. Times will be reviewed as needed.

VIII. COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

- A. Telephone Systems shall have either 9-1-1 secondary PSAP capability and/or one speed dial or dedicated ring down line to primary PSAPs and Designated Fire Dispatch Centers.
- B. Radio communications systems shall have:
 1. Necessary medical frequencies to conduct daily business.
 2. Necessary common frequencies for interagency activities, MCI's or Disasters.

IX. RECORDING EQUIPMENT

- A. Equipment shall be capable of continuously recording all elements of dispatching. (Phone calls, radio traffic, etc.).
- B. Retention of tapes shall be for 180 days unless an unusual occurrence has occurred. In this case, the tape should be held for a period designated by the Communication Manager.

X. DATA REQUIREMENTS

- A. At a minimum, the following data should be collected on every call, as appropriate, by the dispatching agency responsible for tracking the units dispatched.
 - 1. Time of call receipt at EMD Center.
 - 2. Time of dispatch of Units.
 - 3. Time of Units enroute to call.
 - 4. Time of Units on scene of incident (within 200' of incident location).
 - 5. Time of ambulance enroute to hospital.
 - 6. Time of ambulance arrived at hospital Emergency Department area.
 - 7. Time of ambulance clearing hospital.
 - 8. Time of cancellation, if applicable.

XI. PROGRAM APPROVAL

- A. EMD providers requesting approval of their Emergency Medical Dispatcher Program in Napa County must submit an application to the Napa County EMS Agency in accordance with state guidelines and shall include:
 - 1. A complete set of protocols to be utilized by the provider emergency medical dispatchers;
 - 2. The name of the QI Coordinator;
 - 3. The name of the Communications Manager;
 - 4. The name of the Medical Director.
- B. Program approval or disapproval will be made by the Napa County EMS Agency in writing within ninety (90) days of receipt of all required program documentation. Program approval will be for a period of two (2) years initially and four (4) years thereafter.
- C. Noted program deficiencies must be corrected within sixty (60) days of notification. EMD centers shall submit written documentation within forty-eight (48) hours to the Napa County EMS Agency when the Center experiences operational down time, defined as the inability to meet their obligation as a dispatch center being able to receive calls or dispatch resources.
- D. EMD centers shall allow announced audit and on-site inspections, depending on call load, by the EMS Medical Director or his/her designee. All program material is subject to periodic review, as deemed necessary by the Napa County EMS Agency.
- E. The QI Coordinator must notify the Napa County EMS Agency, in writing thirty (30) days in advance of any program operational changes including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Any changes in the EMDPRS;
 - 2. Any changes in the wording of questions/statements utilized by emergency medical dispatchers;
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 - 3. Any changes in the EMDPRS;
 - 4. Any changes in the wording of questions/statements utilized by emergency medical dispatchers;
 - 5. A list of substantial program changes not previously submitted since the last approval;
 - 6. Any substantial administrative changes not previously submitted during the last approval period.
- J. All approved EMD Providers must reapply for program approval a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the end of the program's two (2) year start date.