

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY PREHOSPITAL POLICY

Policy Reference No: 120
Effective Date: 11/01/2008
Supersedes: 04/01/2006
Review Date: 11/01/2010

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH PROGRAM

I. PURPOSE

To establish a comprehensive policy and procedure for Emergency Medical Dispatch in San Luis Obispo County.

II. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code, Sections 1797.204, 1797.206, 1797.220, 1798(a)(b), 1797.252.

III. BACKGROUND

This policy is based on the Emergency Medical Services Authority “Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Program Guidelines” established in 2003, “Model EMD Rules & Regulations” of The National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch, and existing EMD policies of EMS Agencies throughout the state.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Approved EMD Center – An Emergency Medical Dispatch Center that has submitted its request to the EMS Agency and received approval. The center shall be in compliance with all applicable State, Federal, and local laws and policies.
- B. Approved EMD Instructor – An individual who meets the training standards of POST and the EMS Agency to provide EMD Instruction.
- C. Continuing Medical Dispatch Education (CMDE) – Educational experiences in accordance with policies of the EMS Agency.
- D. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program – A program administered by the Emergency Medical Dispatch provider agency for the purpose of insuring safe, efficient, and effective performance of Emergency Medical Dispatchers in regard to their use of the Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference System and patient care provided.

- E. Course Curriculum Certification Agency – The Commission of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) and/or the EMS Agency.
- F. Emergency Medical Dispatcher – A person trained to provide emergency medical dispatch services in accordance with these policies, and that is employed by an emergency medical dispatch provider agency.
- G. Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) – The reception, evaluation, processing, and provision of dispatch life support; management of requests for emergency medical assistance; and participation in ongoing evaluation and improvement of the emergency medical dispatch process.
- H. Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference System (EMDPRS) – The EMS Agency Medical Director-approved Cards for EMD which include call prioritization and pre-arrival instructions. The EMDPRS shall be reviewed through appropriate EMS Agency committees prior to approval by the Medical Director.
- I. Emergency Medical Dispatch Provider Agency (EMD Provider Agency) – An agency that accepts the responsibility to provide emergency medical dispatch services for emergency medical assistance in accordance with these policies.
- J. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency – The San Luis Obispo County Emergency Medical Services Agency.
- K. Medical Director – The San Luis Obispo County Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMS Agency) Medical Director or his/her designee.
- L. Post-Dispatch Instructions (PDI) – Case-specific advice, warning, and treatments given by trained emergency medical dispatchers whenever possible and appropriate to callers after dispatching field responders.
- M. Pre-Arrival Instructions (PAI) – The medically approved scripted instructions given in time-critical situations where correct evaluation, verification, and advice is given by trained emergency medical dispatchers to callers that provide necessary assistance and control of the situation prior to arrival of emergency medical services personnel.
- N. Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) – A public agency dispatch center that receives emergency calls from the public or requests from another PSAP.
- O. Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Coordinator – The individual assigned by the PSAP to oversee its EMD program including continuous quality improvement (CQI) issues.

V. EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH PROVIDER AGENCY APPROVAL

- A. Any public safety dispatch agency wishing to be an approved EMD provider in San Luis Obispo County must submit a written request to the EMS Agency. In order to initiate this process, the dispatch agency shall submit the following:

1. The name of the agency's Emergency Medical Dispatch Coordinator.
 2. A statement of agreement to comply with all EMS Agency policies and procedures related to EMD.
 3. A mechanism to ensure compliance with the continuing education requirements set forth by this policy.
 4. A statement of agreement to utilize and maintain the EMS Agency approved EMDPRS.
- B. The EMS Agency will review the documentation submitted and may approve a provider agency as an EMD provider agency.
- C. The EMS Agency may deny, suspend or revoke EMD approval for failure to comply with established EMS Agency policies or procedures.

VI. EMS AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The EMS Agency will evaluate an EMD Center's medical operations on an ongoing basis for compliance with EMS Agency policies and procedures through the EMS Agency EMD CQI Program.
1. The EMS Agency will validate, on a continuous basis, EMD policies and protocols to ensure that they are appropriate and effective.
 2. An EMS Agency representative may observe operations at an EMD Center or request EMD related records at any time. Requests for EMD related records will be made to the EMD Coordinator.
- B. The EMS Agency will receive and evaluate data from the EMD Centers.
1. The EMS Agency will compile all data from county EMD Centers for quarterly review by the EMD Review Committee. Committee meetings will be scheduled within one month of the scheduled date that EMD Center data is due.
- C. Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference System (EMDPRS)
1. The EMS Agency will audit EMD Cards on a periodic basis. Based on audit results and input from EMD provider agencies, the EMS Agency will implement EMD Card revision processes as necessary.
 2. The EMD Review Committee will evaluate the need for revision, and if in agreement, recommend the change to the EMS Agency for approval.
 3. If the suggested revision is approved, the revised Card will be sent to each EMD Center's EMD Coordinator by the EMS Agency with written notification of the change.

VII. EMD CENTER CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) PROGRAM

- A. The EMD provider agency shall establish a continuous CQI program that is in compliance with this policy.
- B. The EMD provider agency shall appoint an EMD coordinator who is an emergency medical dispatcher with at least two years of practical experience within the last five years. The EMD coordinator is responsible for the following:
 - 1. The coordinator shall review a minimum of three randomly selected medical calls per EMD Dispatcher per month. A monthly summary of these calls shall be provided to the EMSA Agency within 30 days following the reporting month.
 - 2. EMD case review:
 - a. The EMD Coordinator shall measure individual emergency medical dispatcher performance in an objective, consistent manner, adhering to a standardized scoring procedure.
 - b. Routine and timely feedback shall be provided to the EMD to allow for improvement in his/her performance.
 - c. The EMD Coordinator shall provide a compliance-to-protocol report at least annually to the EMS Agency to ensure that the EMD Provider Agency is complying with the EMD policies and procedures of the EMS Agency.
- C. The CQI process shall:
 - 1. Monitor the quality of medical instruction given to callers including ongoing random case review for each emergency medical dispatcher.
 - 2. Conduct random or incident specific case reviews to identify calls/practices that demonstrate excellence in dispatch performance and/or identify practices that do not conform to defined policy or procedures so that appropriate training can be initiated.
 - 3. Review EMD reports, and/or other records of patient care to compare performance against medical standards of practice.
 - 4. Recommend training, policies and procedures for quality improvement.
 - 5. Identify CMDE needs and trends in EMS calls and responses.

VIII. EMS AGENCY CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) PROGRAM

- A. The EMS Agency will establish an EMD Review Committee that will meet, at a minimum, quarterly. The EMS Agency CQI Coordinator will chair the committee. All EMD Centers will be represented on the committee. The EMS Medical Director or designee will attend meetings and has final authority for medical decisions relating to EMD policies and procedures following input from EMS Agency committees as appropriate.

- B. The EMS Agency will receive and review EMD Center monthly reports and analyze quarterly on a system-wide basis.
- C. The EMS Agency will implement EMDPRS Card revision processes and/or additional training, as needed.
- D. The EMS Agency will receive and review Priority II dispatches with Priority I condition found on arrival when notified directly by field and/or EMD personnel or through summary reports from EMD Centers.
- E. The EMSA Agency will receive, review, and respond to concerns submitted by EMD Center Coordinators.
- F. The EMS Agency may review dispatcher tapes at random.

IX. EMD PROCEDURES

A. Use of the EMDPRS

1. Every approved EMD Center shall utilize the EMDPRS when trained dispatch personnel are available and system call volume permits.
2. The approved EMD Center shall be responsible for determining when use of the EMDPRS is suspended due to system overload or lack of trained dispatch personnel.
3. In the event that an accredited EMD dispatch center temporarily suspends use of the EMDPRS all emergency medical calls shall be dispatched in accordance with the dispatch center's policies
4. The approved EMD Center shall not modify the EMDPRS.

X. EMD TRAINING

- A. Basic EMD training is designed to provide additional training to dispatchers who are already skilled and knowledgeable in dispatch and telecommunications procedures in order to provide medical assistance to callers.
- B. Required Basic EMD Training Course Hours
 1. Basic EMD Training shall consist of not less than twenty-four (24) hours.
 2. In addition, emergency medical dispatchers shall be certified in adult, child, and infant CPR.
- C. Required Basic EMD Training Course Content
 1. Introduction

- a. Emergency Medical Dispatcher role and responsibilities
 - b. Legal and liability issues in EMD
 - c. Emergency Medical Dispatch concepts
2. Information gathering and dispatch
 - a. Obtaining information from callers
 - b. Resource identification and allocation
 - c. Providing emergency care instructions, including Automated External Defibrillation (AED)
 3. EMD protocol reference system and chief complaints
 - a. Introduction to the EMDPRS
 - b. Introduction to chief complaint types
 - c. San Luis Obispo County EMS system overview
 - d. Scenario based skills/practical exercises
 - e. Final examination
 4. Course content shall be reviewed and approved by the EMS Agency Medical Director who provides oversight of the program.

D. EMD Instructor Criteria

1. Each training program shall have a principle instructor(s), approved by the EMS Agency and the PSAP the instructor is employed by.
2. EMD instructor training shall consist of not less than eight (8) hours and cover at a minimum:
 - a. EMS Agency EMD training course content
 - b. Review of the EMDPRS
 - c. San Luis Obispo County EMS system overview
 - d. CQI issues
 - e. Continuing Medical Dispatch Education

E. Course Curriculum Certification

1. The EMD course curriculum shall be approved and certified by POST and the EMS Agency Medical Director.
2. The EMD provider agency shall issue a course completion record to each person who has successfully completed an approved EMD course.

XI. CONTINUING MEDICAL DISPATCH EDUCATION

- A. An emergency medical dispatcher shall receive a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours of continuing medical dispatch education (CMDE) every two years.
- B. CMDE shall be coordinated and organized through the EMD Provider Agency.

- C. CMDE shall include issues identified by the EMD continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, and one or more of the following:
1. Medical conditions, incident types, and criteria necessary when performing caller assessment and prioritization of medical calls
 2. Use of the EMDPRS
 3. Call taking interrogation skills
 4. Skills in providing telephone pre-arrival instructions
 5. Technical aspects of the system (phone patching, emergency procedures, etc.)
 6. Skill practice and critique of skill performance
 7. Attendance at EMD workshops/conferences