



COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE POLICY

Policy No. 6730 Date Issued: June 1, 1996
Section: 6700 – EMD Procedure Date Revised: February 14, 2022
Accreditation Standards:
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY RULE-EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD) PROGRAM SUSPENSION
APPROVED: <signed copy on file> Santa Cruz County EMS
APPROVED: <signed copy on file> San Benito County EMS
APPROVED: <signed copy on file> American Medical Response
APPROVED: <signed copy on file> Amethyst Uchida, General Manager

1.0 Purpose

The Emergency Rule is applicable in situations of extreme over-capacity in the communications center.

With supervisor approval, an EMD may suspend PreArrival Instructions (PAIs) and suspend or discontinue Post-Dispatch Instructions (PDIs) once Case Entry, Key Questions, and final coding are complete.

2.0 Procedure

2.1. The EMD has permission to suspend PAIs or PDIs when there is

- Unanswered emergency calls in the call queue.
- Emergency radio traffic
- A Mass Casualty Incident (MCI)
- A Natural Disaster
- A Pandemic
- Critically low dispatcher staffing
- Supervisor approval

3.0 Every attempt to complete the interrogation sequence will be made; at a minimum, Case Entry and Key Question information will be correctly obtained, and a final determinate code will be assigned to the incident.

3.1. The emergency rule does not apply to

- Cardiac/respiratory arrest
- Choking
- Childbirth

4.0 Disconnecting with the caller

When faced with an Emergency Rule situation, the call taker will release the caller using protocol's "urgent disconnect" script.

5.0 Declared Disaster Mode

During a disaster (for example, a major earthquake) that immediately overwhelms the EMS response system, the Communications Operations Supervisor may declare a "disaster mode" EMD operation. In disaster mode, ask the caller if the patient can be transported to a hospital by anyone at the scene. If yes, document the call and release the caller. If no, advise the caller that they will be placed on a list for dispatch as units become available.