

POLICY: 470.00
TITLE: Behavioral Health Interfacility Transfers

EFFECTIVE: 02/01/2023
REVIEW: 02/2027
SUPERCEDES:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES ON FILE IN EMS OFFICE

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Behavioral Health Interfacility Transfers

I. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "ALS Ambulance" means a properly staffed and equipped ALS ambulance, as specified in Agency Policy 407.00 - Equipment and Medical Supply Inventory and Agency Policy 405.00, Ground Ambulance Staffing Levels.
- B. "BLS Ambulance" means a properly staffed and equipped BLS ambulance, as specified in Agency Policy 407.00 – Ground Ambulance Equipment and Medical Supply Inventory and Agency Policy 405.00, Ground Ambulance Staffing Levels.
- C. "Behavioral Health Patient" means the transfer of a person who requires treatment in a licensed inpatient behavioral, mental health or psychiatric facility from a hospital to another facility.
- D. "Delayed Transfer" means when any delay in transferring the patient **does not** result in placing the patient's health in immediate jeopardy. These patients will be transported by an ALS Non-System Ambulance, BLS Non-System Ambulance or a Safety Car.
- E. "Immediate Transfer" means when any delay in transferring the patient could result in placing the patient's health in immediate jeopardy. These patients will be transported by a 9-1-1 System Ambulance.
- F. "Safety Car" means a vehicle, annually approved for behavioral health patient transports, that has been modified to provide a separate passenger area that prevents contact with the driver from the rear passenger compartment. The car shall be equipped with controlled power windows and door locks, child safety locks, and working seatbelts for all seats in which a person will be sitting. The car must be equipped with a First Aid Kit, AED, dispatch radio, and cell phone and staffed with one driver certified, at a minimum in first aid and CPR.
- G. 9-1-1 Non-System Ambulance – means an ALS or BLS ambulance whose primary function is to respond to non-emergency calls.
- H. "9-1-1 System Ambulance" means an ALS or BLS ambulance whose primary function is to respond to emergency calls for service received through the 9-1-1 system.

III. PURPOSE

To establish criteria for transporting behavioral health patients.

IV. POLICY

- A. 9-1-1 System Ambulances are a limited resource and shall remain available for responses to 9-1-1 system emergencies.
- B. Behavioral Health patients requiring an Immediate Transfer will be transported by a 9-1-1 System Ambulance when the emergency department physician of the transferring facility has:
 - 1. Performed a Medical Screening Evaluation (MSE) of the behavioral health patient; and
 - 2. Determined the patient has a medical condition which requires the use of a 9-1-1 System Ambulance to transfer the patient to a receiving facility.
 - 3. Determined the patient must be restrained, has a medical condition that requires continuous monitoring by an attendant, or other condition that requires the use of a gurney to safely transport the patient.
 - 4. Determined the patient's condition requires an Immediate Transfer
- C. Behavioral Health patients requiring a Delayed Transfer will be transported by a 9-1-1 Non-System Ambulance or Safety Car when the emergency department physician of the transferring facility has:
 - 1. Performed a Medical Screening Evaluation (MSE) of the behavioral health patient; and
 - 2. Determined the patient does not have a medical condition which requires the use of a 9-1-1 System Ambulance to transfer the patient to a receiving facility.
 - 3. Determined the patient's condition requires a Delayed Transfer.

V. PROCEDURE

- A. Procedure for Requesting an Immediate Transfer of a Behavioral Health Patient
 - 1. The emergency department physician shall:
 - a. Complete an Agency Interfacility Transfer Form indicating the diagnosis and treatments requiring a 9-1-1 EMS System Ambulance to be used for transport and identify the risks posed during transport.
 - b. Contact the ambulance dispatch non-emergency telephone number to request a transporting vehicle.
- B. Procedure for Requesting a Delayed Transfer of a Behavioral Health Patient
 - 1. The emergency department physician shall:
 - a. Complete an Agency Interfacility Transfer Form and a Non-Medical Transport via Safety Car Form, if the patient is being transported via Safety Car, indicating the diagnosis and treatments requiring an ALS Non-System Ambulance, BLS Non-System Ambulance or Safety Car to be used for transport and identify the risks posed.

- b. Determined the patient can be safely transported to a behavioral, mental health, or psychiatric facility and does not require an ambulance to transport the patient.

VI. AMBULANCE PROVIDER REQUIREMENT

- A. Upon receipt of a request for an Immediate Transfer of a Behavioral Health Patient, the ambulance provider shall:
 1. Respond immediately with a 9-1-1 System Ambulance.
- B. Upon receipt of a request for a Delayed Transfer of a Behavioral Health Patient, the ambulance provider shall respond with the level of transportation as determined by the transferring emergency physician:
 1. ALS Non-System Ambulance
 2. BLS Non-System Ambulance
 3. Safety Car
- C. Ambulance provider personnel will be responsible for completing the following:
 1. Obtain Agency Interfacility Form, face sheet.
 2. Obtain the Non-Medical Transport via Safety Car Form if patient is being transported in a Safety Car.
 3. Confirm all required documents for transfer are completed and legible.
 4. Safely transport the patient from the transferring facility to the receiving facility.
 5. Communicate with dispatch agency via radio or cell phone the beginning and ending mileage of the transporting vehicle.
 6. Always ensure supervision of the patient.
 7. Ensure original 5150 hold paperwork is delivered with the patient at the receiving facility.
 8. Ensure the patient's belongings are delivered with the patient at the receiving facility.