

POLICY: 944.00  
TITLE: Behavioral Health Interfacility Transfers in Mariposa County

EFFECTIVE: 7/1/2017  
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SUPERCEDES:

APPROVAL SIGNATURES ON FILE IN EMS OFFICE

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**Behavioral Health Interfacility Transfers in Mariposa County**

I. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, sections 1797.220

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **“Advanced Life Support”** as defined in section 1797.52 of Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5.
- B. **“EMT (Emergency Medical Technician)”** means a person who has successfully completed a basic EMT course which meets the requirements of Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 2, and is certified in the State of California as an EMT.
- C. **“Interfacility transfer (IFT)”** shall mean the movement of a patient from a hospital emergency department or a hospital inpatient area hereafter referred to as "facility", to any other facility for the purpose of evaluation or treatment at a higher level of care.
- D. **“9-1-1 EMS System Ambulance”** means a properly staffed and equipped ALS ambulance, as specified in Agency Policy 407.00 - Equipment and Medication Inventory and Agency Policy 405.00, Ground Ambulance Staffing Levels.

III. PURPOSE

To establish criteria for transporting behavioral health patients in Mariposa County.

IV. POLICY

- A. Ambulances are a limited resource within the rural geography of Mariposa County and shall remain an available resource for responses to 9-1-1 system level emergencies for the citizens and tourists located within Mariposa County.
- B. To restrict the use of 9-1-1 system level ambulances for transporting non-emergent behavioral health patients to a facility located outside of Mariposa County, the following criteria must be met:

1. A Mariposa County 9-1-1 EMS System Ambulance may be used to perform a behavioral health patient IFT when the emergency department physician of the transferring facility has:
  - a. Performed a Medical Screening Evaluation (MSE) of the behavioral health patient; and
  - b. Has determined the patient has a medical condition which requires the use of an advanced life support ambulance from the 9-1-1 EMS System to transfer the patient to a receiving facility outside of Mariposa County.

V. PROCEDURE

A. Procedure for requesting a 9-1-1 EMS System ALS ambulance:

1. The emergency department physician shall complete an Agency Interfacility Transfer Form indicating the diagnosis and treatments requiring an ALS ambulance to be used for transferring the behavioral health patient.
2. The emergency department physician shall determine the severity of the transfer:
  - a. Immediate Transfer - shall be requested when any delay in transferring the patient by vehicle could result in placing the patient's health in immediate jeopardy.
  - b. Delayed Transfer - shall be requested when any delay in transferring the patient by vehicle **does not** result in placing the patient's health in immediate jeopardy.

B. Procedure for requesting BLS transport:

1. The emergency department physician shall complete an Agency Interfacility Transfer Form indicating the diagnosis requiring a BLS unit to be used for transferring the behavioral health patient.
2. The emergency department physician shall determine the severity of the transfer:
  - a. Non-emergency transfer – shall be requested when a patient can be transported by a minimum level of Basic Life Support

VI. AMBULANCE PROVIDER REQUIREMENT

A. Behavioral Health Patients designated as a “non-emergency” transfer as requiring a BLS unit may be transported by one of the following, as determined by the transferring emergency physician:

1. BLS Ambulance with two state certified EMTs
  - a. A BLS ambulance must meet the requirements of Agency policy.

2. Safety Car with one driver certified, at a minimum in basic first aid, CPR and proof of completion of a California Department of Justice (DOJ) Background Check (if not previously on file with the Agency).
  - a. A vehicle, such as a retired police vehicle, that has a transport partition separating the driver from the back-seat occupant.
  - b. A safety car must be equipped with a first aid kit, cellular phone and dispatch radio.
  - c. The driver must communicate with dispatch agency via radio or cellular phone the beginning and ending mileage.



