

Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency
EMS System Policies and Procedures

POLICY: INTERFACILITY TRANSFERS

#315.00

Creation Date: 11-06-2019

Medical Director: _____ Revision Date:


Kimberly Freeman, M.D.

EMS Coordinator: _____ Review Date: 11-2024

Clarence Teem, M.S., EMT-P

I. AUTHORITY

Division 2.5, California Health and Safety Code and Title 22, Division 9 of the California Code of Regulations.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define standards for requesting, processing and responding to interfacility transfers.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Immediate Transfer" or "Emergency Transfer" means a transfer from a medical facility for which any delay could result in placing a patient's health in immediate jeopardy.
- B. "Urgent Transfer" means a transfer from a medical facility that requires a timely response but delays of up to thirty (30) minutes will not place the patient's health in immediate jeopardy.
- C. "Routine Transfer" means a transfer from a medical facility that requires a timely response but delays of up to one (1) hour will not place the patient's health in immediate jeopardy.
- D. "Non-Emergency Transfer" means a pre-arranged transfer for which delay will have no foreseeable impact on the patient's medical condition. May also include transfer of a stable patient at the request of their insurance provider, transfer to out-of-area congregate living facilities and behavioral health transfers requiring an ambulance.
- E. "Psychiatric Patient Transfer by Safety Car" means the transfer of a person who requires treatment in a licensed inpatient behavioral, mental health or psychiatric facility from a hospital in Tuolumne County to a facility located outside of Tuolumne County and does not require an ambulance to safely transport the patient as determined by a physician. The patient will be transported in a vehicle that has been modified to

provide a separate passenger area that prevents contact to the driver from the passenger.

- F. "Psychiatric Patient Transfer by Ambulance" means the transfer of a person who requires treatment in a licensed inpatient behavioral, mental health or psychiatric facility from a hospital in Tuolumne County to a facility located outside of Tuolumne County. An ambulance shall only be used for a psychiatric patient transfer when a patient must be restrained, has a medical condition that requires continuous monitoring by an attendant, or other condition that requires a gurney to safely transport the patient as determine by a physician.
- G. "Advanced Life Support" (ALS) means those procedures and skills contained in the scope of practice of a Mobile Intensive Care Paramedic as specified in Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 100145.
- H. "Basic Life Support" (BLS) means those procedures and skills contained in the scope of practice of an Emergency Medical Technician-I as specified in Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Sections 100063 and 100064.

IV. POLICY

- A. Except for immediate transfers, all ambulance transfers may be delayed if there are two (2) or more ambulances from the 9-1-1 system are not available in the County.
- B. Immediate transfers are to be requested through the 9-1-1 system and, the closest available ambulance will respond immediately, but without lights/sirens.
- C. Urgent transfers are to be requested through the answering service and the ambulance unit next up on the transfer rotation shall respond as soon as possible. The transferring ambulances are to respond promptly. The ambulance provider shall notify the transferring facility if it is reasonably believed that there will not be adequate ambulances in the system to transfer the patient within thirty (30) minutes. If the local ambulance provider is unable to meet the thirty (30) minute standard, the transferring facility may contact another ambulance provider.
- D. Routine transfers are to be requested through the answering service and the ambulance unit next up on the transfer rotation shall respond as soon as possible. The transferring ambulances are to respond promptly. The ambulance provider shall notify the transferring facility if it is reasonably believed that there will not be adequate ambulances in the system to transfer the patient within one (1) hour. If the local ambulance provider is unable to meet the one (1) hour standard, the transferring facility may contact another ambulance provider.

- E. Non-emergency transfers and psychiatric patient transfers by ambulance are to be requested through the answering service and the ambulance unit next up on the transfer rotation shall respond at the predetermined time. The ambulance provider shall notify the transferring facility if it is reasonably believed that there will not be adequate ambulances in the system to transfer the patient within four (4) hours. If the local ambulance provider is unable to meet the four (4) hour standard the transferring facility may contact another ambulance provider.
 - F. Psychiatric patient transfers by safety car are to be requested through the answering service. Prior to requesting a psychiatric patient transfer, the patient must receive a medical screening examination to determine if the patient is stable for transfer and can be safely transported by safety car.
- V. PROCEDURE
- A. For transfers requiring an ambulance, the transferring physician shall complete an Interfacility Transfer Form and a Physician's Certifying Statement (PCS). The transferring physician shall also specify the level of service (ALS or BLS) required by the transporting ambulance as well as any medical orders to be performed by the ambulance attendant during the transfer. All aforementioned forms shall be provided to the transporting ambulance crew prior to transport.
 - B. For transfers requiring a safety car, the transferring physician shall complete an Interfacility Transfer Form and a non-emergency transport via safety car form. All aforementioned forms shall be provided to the safety car driver prior to transport.