

Tuolumne County
Emergency Medical Services Agency

Title: **Interfacility Transfers**

Medical Director Signature: on file

EMS Coordinator Signature: on file

EMS Policy No. **315.00**

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I) Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define standards for requesting, processing and responding to interfacility transfers and to establish criteria for the utilization of the limited ambulance resources available in Tuolumne County.

II) Authority

Division 2.5, California Health and Safety Code Section 1797.220 and Title 22, Division 9 of the California Code of Regulations.

III) Definitions

- A) "Immediate Transfer" or "Emergency Transfer" means a transfer from a medical facility for which any delay may place the 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 facility and behavioral health transfers requiring an ambulance.
- E) "Psychiatric Patient Transfers 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.
- F) "Safety Car" means a vehicle approved for psychiatric transports that has been modified to provide a separate passenger area that prevents contact to the driver from the rear passenger compartment. The car will be equipped with controlled power window and door locks, child safety locks and working seatbelts for all seats in which a person will be sitting.
- G) "Safety Car Driver" means an individual with a California Driver's License, American Heart Association Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, and First Aid
- H) "Patient Sitter" means an Emergency Room Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant or Registered Nurse, EMT, or paramedic. Generally, this person is employed by the transferring facility, though a transport provider employee may also be utilized if available.

- I) "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.
- J) "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) Medical Interfacility Transfers

- 1) Except for immediate transfers, all ambulance transfers may be delayed if there are two (2) or more ambulances from the 9-1-1 system that are not available in county.
- 2) Transfer Type
 - (a) Immediate transfers are to be requested through the 9-1-1 system and, the closest available ambulance will respond immediately, but without lights/sirens.
 - (b) Urgent transfers are to be requested through the answering service and the ambulance unit next up on the transfer rotation shall 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 to request transfer.
 - (c) 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 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 to request transfer.
 - (d) 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. Psychiatric patient transfer by 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 determined by a physician. The ambulance provider shall notify the transferring facility if it is reasonable 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 to request transfer.
- 3) Procedure
 - (a) For transfers requiring an ambulance, the transferring physician shall complete an Interfacility Transfer Form indicating the diagnosis requiring ambulance to be used for transferring the patient and identifying the risk posed during transport. 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) Interfacility Transfers by Safety Car

- 1) Ambulances are a finite resource within the Tuolumne County EMS system. In order to ensure that ambulance resources are available to the citizens and visitors of Tuolumne County to respond to life-threatening medical and traumatic emergencies, it is the policy of the Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency to restrict the use of ambulances in performing psychiatric patient transfers.
- 2) 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.
 - (a) The transferring facility will provide a patient sitter for transportation when the patient is **not** initially assessed as a no to low-risk patient.
- 3) Procedure
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) Safety Car driver will be responsible for:
 - (i) Transporting the patient from a facility within Tuolumne County to a predesignated receiving facility.
 - (ii) Completing and submitting necessary documentation:
 - CHP log
 - Safety Car cover sheet
 - Patient face sheet
 - Patient order for non-emergent transport via safety car
 - Pink and goldenrod interfacility transfer forms
 - (iii) Returning the patient sitter.
 - (iv) Fueling and Cleaning the Safety Car.
 - (v) Reporting any mechanical issues to their supervisor.
 - (c) Patient sitter will be responsible for:
 - (i) Ensuring supervision of the patient at all times.
 - (ii) Providing the patient with emotional support.
 - (iii) Ensuring the original 5150 hold paperwork is delivered with the patient to the receiving facility.
 - (iv) Ensuring the patient's belongings are delivered with the patient to the receiving facility.
 - (v) Delivering the patient care packet to the receiving facility.