

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

(EMT, PARAMEDIC, MICN)  
REFERENCE NO. 502

SUBJECT: **PATIENT DESTINATION**

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**PURPOSE:** To ensure that 9-1-1 patients are transported to the most appropriate facility that is staffed, equipped, and prepared to administer emergency and/or definitive care appropriate to the needs of the patient.

**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220  
California Administrative Code, Title 13, Section 1105 (c)

**PRINCIPLES:**

1. In the absence of decisive factors to the contrary, 9-1-1 patients shall be transported to the most accessible 9-1-1 receiving facility equipped, staffed, and prepared to receive emergency cases and administer emergency care appropriate to the needs of the patient.
2. The most accessible receiving (MAR) facility may or may not be the closest facility geographically. Transport personnel shall take into consideration traffic, weather conditions, or other factors that may influence transport time in identifying the most accessible facility.
3. The most appropriate receiving facility for a patient may be the health facility which is affiliated with their health plan. Depending upon the provider impression for the patient and medical history, it may be in the patient's best interest to be transported to their 'medical home', as defined by their health plan, personal physician, and/or medical records.
4. Patients shall not be transported to a medical facility that is on diversion due to internal disaster.
5. Notwithstanding any other provision of this reference, and in accordance with Ref. No. 503, Guidelines for Hospitals Requesting Diversion of ALS/BLS Patients, final authority for patient destination rests with the base hospital handling the call. Base hospitals shall honor diversion requests based on patient condition and available system resources. 9-1-1 patients shall ordinarily be transported to general acute care hospitals with a basic emergency department permit. Transport to other medical facilities (hospitals with a stand-by permit, clinics and other medical facilities approved by the EMS Agency) shall be performed only in accordance with this policy.

**POLICY:**

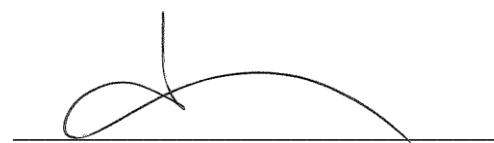
- I. Transport of Patients by EMT Personnel
  - A. EMT personnel shall transport 9-1-1 patients deemed stable and requiring only

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PAGE 1 OF 4

APPROVED:   
Director, EMS Agency

  
Medical Director, EMS Agency

- basic life support (BLS) to the MAR (exception: BLS Diversion or Internal Disaster).
- B. If the MAR has requested BLS diversion as per Ref. 503, the patient may be diverted to an alternate facility assuming the involved BLS unit estimates that it can reach an alternate facility within fifteen (15) minutes from the incident location. If there are no open facilities within this time frame, BLS patients shall be directed to the MAR, regardless of its diversion status (exception: Internal Disaster).
  - C. EMT personnel may honor patient requests to be transported to other than the MAR provided that the patient is deemed stable, requires basic life support measures only, and the ambulance is not unreasonably removed from its primary area of response. In order to facilitate this, EMT personnel may transfer care of a patient to another EMT team if necessary.
  - D. In life-threatening situations (e.g., unmanageable airway or uncontrollable hemorrhage) in which the estimated time of arrival (ETA) of the paramedics exceeds the ETA to the MAR, EMTs should exercise their clinical judgment as to whether it is in the patient's best interest to be transported prior to the arrival of paramedics.
  - E. EMT personnel may immediately transport hypotensive trauma patients with life-threatening, penetrating injuries to the torso to the closest trauma center, not the MAR, when the transport time is less than the estimated time of paramedic arrival. The transporting unit should make every effort to contact the receiving trauma center while in route.
- II. Transport of Patients by Paramedic Personnel
- A. Patients should be transported to the MAR unless:
    - 1. The base hospital determines that another facility is more appropriate to meet the needs of the patient.
    - 2. The patient meets criteria or guidelines for transport to a Los Angeles County designated specialty care center (i.e., Trauma Center, Pediatric Trauma Center, ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction Receiving Center, Extracorporeal Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (ECPR) Receiving Center, Emergency Department Approved for Pediatrics, Pediatric Medical Center, Perinatal Center, Sexual Assault Response Team Center, or Stroke Center).
    - 3. The patient requests a specific hospital; and
      - a. The patient's condition is considered sufficiently stable to tolerate additional transport time; and
      - b. The requested hospital can provide services appropriate to the patient's chief complaint; and
      - c. The EMS provider has determined that such a transport would not

unreasonably remove the unit from its primary area of response. If the provider is unable to honor the request, and the patient therefore refuses to be transported, the provider should attempt to arrange for alternate transportation (i.e., private ambulance), in order to assist patient with receiving necessary treatment.

4. The MAR has requested diversion of 9-1-1 patients requiring advanced life support (ALS) as specified in Ref. No. 503. ALS patients may be directed to an alternate open facility provided:
  - a. The patient does not exhibit an unmanageable airway or uncontrolled hemorrhage.
  - b. The involved ALS unit estimates that it can reach an alternate facility within fifteen (15) minutes, Code 3, from the incident location. If there are no open facilities within this time frame, ALS patients shall be directed to the MAR, regardless of its diversion status (exception: Internal Disaster).
- B. Paramedic personnel may transfer care of a patient to another paramedic team if necessary. If base hospital contact has been made, the initial paramedic team shall advise the base hospital that another paramedic team has assumed responsibility for the patient.

### III. Destination of Restrained Patients

- A. Restrained patients shall be transported to the MAR within the guidelines of this policy. Allowable exceptions:
  1. Patients without a medical complaint, with a 5150 order written by a designated Department of Mental Health Team, when transport to a psychiatric facility has been arranged.
  2. A law enforcement request for transport to medical facilities other than the closest may be honored with base hospital concurrence.

### IV. Transport to Hospitals or Medical Facilities that are Non 9-1-1 Receiving Facilities

- A. Patient requests for transport to hospitals that are not 9-1-1 Receiving Facilities may be honored by EMT or paramedic personnel provided:
  1. The patient, family, or private physician is made aware that the requested hospital is not a 9-1-1 receiving facility.
  2. The Base hospital or EMS provider contacts the requested facility and ensures that the hospital has agreed to accept the patient.
  3. The patient's condition is considered sufficiently stable to tolerate the additional transport time and the EMS provider has determined that such a transport would not unreasonably remove the unit from its primary area of response.

- B. Other medical facilities approved on an individual basis by the EMS Agency:

9-1-1 patients may be transported to medical facilities other than hospitals (e.g., psychiatric urgent care centers, sobering centers) only when approved in advance by the EMS Agency.

CROSS REFERENCE:

Prehospital Care Manual:

Ref. No. 501, **Hospital Directory**  
Ref. No. 503, **Guidelines for Hospitals Requesting Diversion of ALS/BLS Patients**  
Ref. No. 504, **Trauma Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 506, **Trauma Triage**  
Ref. No. 508, **Sexual Assault Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 508.1 **SART Center Roster**  
Ref. No. 510, **Pediatric Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 511, **Perinatal Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 512, **Burn Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 513, **ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 516, **Cardiac Arrest Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 518, **Decompression Emergencies/Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 519, **Management of Multiple Casualty Incidents**  
Ref. No. 521, **Stroke Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 526, **Behavioral/Psychiatric Crisis Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 528, **Intoxicated (Alcohol) Patient Destination**  
Ref. No. 838, **Application of Patient Restraints**