

	EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY	POLICY NUMBER	401
	A Division of the Merced County Department of Public Health		
SUBJECT: PHYSICIAN INVOLVEMENT “ON-SCENE” WITH EMS PERSONNEL	Effective Date	07/2024	
Authority: California Health and Safety Code Division 2.5 Sections 1797.220-226	Initial Date:	07/1993	
	Review Date:	07/2026	
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy shall define the role of the non-Base Hospital physician in the prehospital setting and to provide guidance to EMS personnel regarding their involvement with “On-Scene” physicians.

II. POLICY

In accordance with established procedures, appropriate emergency medical personnel (EMTs and Paramedics) may utilize the assistance of an “On-Scene” Physician in the care of stable and/or unstable patients.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Physician Assistance with an Unstable Patient

An “unstable patient” is defined by prehospital personnel at the scene to have present or impending respiratory or circulatory failure (i.e., unstable airway, need for intubation, shock, cardiac dysrhythmia with either hypotension, congestive heart failure, cardiopulmonary arrest, or chest pain or category immediate/red in a multi-casualty incident).

When at the scene with an unstable patient, if an individual offers their assistance and introduces themselves as a licensed physician in the State of California, prehospital personnel shall:

1. Defer any procedure for identification and immediately allow the physician to assist or direct patient care to the level that the physician desires.
2. When appropriate, describe the three options for physician involvement and, as appropriate, provide the physician the opportunity to read the “Note to Physician on Involvement with EMT-Is and Paramedics” card.
3. At the earliest convenience, notify the Base Hospital Physician of the situation and of the “On-Scene” Physician’s level of involvement.
4. If appropriate, allow the physician to speak with the Base Hospital Physician.
5. Follow the direction of the Base Hospital Physician.

Signatures on File

Approved By: Tim Williams
EMS Administrator

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EMS Medical Director

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6. In cases of controversy between the “On-Scene” Physician and prehospital personnel regarding patient care, the Base Hospital Physician will be the final arbitrator for medical direction of the paramedic.

B. Physician Assistance with a Stable Patient

When at the scene of an emergency involving a stable patient, if an individual offers their assistance and introduces themselves as a licensed physician in the State of California, prehospital personnel shall:

1. If prehospital personnel does not know the physician’s identity, request identification.
2. Provide the physician the opportunity to read the California Medical Association “Note to Physician on Involvement with EMT-Is or Paramedics” card and describe for the physician the three levels of possible physician involvement.
3. Advise the Base Hospital Physician of the situation and of the “On-Scene” Physician’s level of involvement.
4. If appropriate, allow the physician to speak with the Base Hospital Physician
5. Follow the direction of the Base Hospital.
6. In cases of controversy between the “On-Scene” Physician and prehospital personnel regarding patient care, the Base Hospital Physician will be the final arbitrator for medical direction of the paramedic.

C. Options for Physician Assistance

1. Offers Assistance Only - A physician may offer BLS level assistance as another pair of eyes or hands or in making suggestions but allows medical direction to remain with the Base Hospital or standard prehospital protocols.

In this situation, prehospital personnel shall follow their normal operational policies and procedures.

2. Offers Medical Advice and Assistance - A physician may request to speak to the Base Hospital Physician and offer medical advice and assistance.

In this situation, prehospital personnel shall follow the direction of the Base Hospital Physician.

3. Takes Total Responsibility - A physician may take total responsibility for the care given to the patient and, if possible, physically accompany the patient until the patient arrives at a hospital and responsibility is assumed by the receiving physician.

D. Physician Request to Utilize ALS Drugs or Equipment

If a physician at the scene of an unstable patient request to use the prehospital unit's drug and/or equipment inventory, the requested drugs and/or equipment should be made available immediately.

If a physician at the scene of a stable patient request to use the prehospital unit's drug and/or equipment inventory, the requested drugs and/or equipment should be made available after the physician is either recognized by the Paramedic or provides appropriate identification. The role of the paramedic shall function within their accredited scope of practice only.

Initially, the paramedic should provide care identified in the "Standing Orders" portion of the Treatment Protocols. The Base Hospital Physician should be immediately notified and informed of the patient's progress and treatment being provided.

If the "On-Scene" Physician is requesting the paramedic to perform treatment outside the accredited scope of practice or treatment only allowed with Base Hospital approval, the paramedic should inform the Physician of their limitations and the need to notify the Base Hospital Physician.

The Base Hospital Physician may direct ALS personnel to actively assist the physician as appropriate with patient care. The "On-Scene" Physician shall sign the Prehospital Care Report for all instructions given.

E. Physician Involvement Card

A California Medical Association "Note to Physician on Involvement with EMT-Is and Paramedics" card shall be available on each ALS unit, BLS unit, within Merced County.

The following is a sample of the "Note to Physician on Involvement with EMT-Is or Paramedics" card. Copies are available through the Merced County EMS Agency.

 STATE OF CALIFORNIA CMA CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION	ENDORSED ALTERNATIVES FOR PHYSICIAN INVOLVEMENT After identifying yourself by name as a physician licensed in the State of California, and, if requested, showing proof of identity, you may choose one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Offer your assistance with another pair of eyes, hands or suggestions, but let the life support team remain under base hospital control; or,2. Request to talk to the base station physician and directly offer your medical advice and assistance; or,3. Take total responsibility for the care given by the life support team and physically accompany the patient until the patient arrives at a hospital and responsibility is assumed by the receiving physician. In addition, you must sign for all instructions given in accordance with local policy and procedures. (Whenever possible, remain in contact with the base station physician) (REV. 7/88) 88 49638 Provided by the EMS Authority (over)
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